

Israel reveals it has been holding alleged Iraq spy for eight years

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli authorities revealed Monday that they have been holding an Arab Israeli for eight years on charges of spying for Iraq.

The supreme court authorised release of information concerning the case of Munir Fathi Said in a ruling which overturned a lower court

decision to release the prisoner from the remainder of his 13-year jail term.

Mr. Said was convicted in 1990 of espionage by a court in the northern city of Nazareth and was sentenced to 13 years in prison, according to a statement released by the supreme court.

According to the charges

against him, Mr. Said provided Iraq between 1981 and 1988 with photographs of classified Israeli military installations, including the Dimona nuclear facility suspected of producing Israel's nuclear weapons arsenal, and of oil depots in the port city of Haifa.

A prison parole board

recently recommended Mr. Said's release on condition he not leave the country and report regularly to the police.

But the attorney general overruled the board, saying Mr. Said remained a danger to Israel's security.

The supreme court on Monday upheld the attorney general's decision.

Israel releases Lebanese man after two years in captivity

TYRE (AFP) — A Lebanese man, seized by Israel two years ago, was released Monday after an Israeli court found him innocent of conducting anti-Israeli attacks, Red Cross sources said.

The Israeli army handed over a handcuffed and blindfolded Ali Ahmad Banjak, 22, to Barbara Hinierman, the International Committee of the Red Cross's delegate in the town of Naqoura in the

Israeli-occupied zone of south Lebanon, the sources said.

The Red Cross took Mr. Banjak to the southern port city of Tyre where he was interrogated by the Lebanese army. He then headed home to the nearby village of Shehaytiye, they said.

Mr. Banjak was abducted August 15, 1996, by an Israeli commando in the Nabatiyeh region just

beyond the occupied zone. He was found not guilty April 23 of membership in Hizbollah and of firing Katyusha rockets on northern Israel in April 1996 during Israel's Grapes of Wrath military offensive against Hizbollah in Lebanon.

Hizbollah conducts most of the attacks against the zone, which Israel occupies to protect its northern territories from cross-border attack.

Israel refuses entry to musician for Nakba celebrations

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli authorities have prevented a Palestinian musician from entering the country to play at Palestinian celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the "Nakba," or Catastrophe, the organisers said Monday.

Marwan Abbadi, a Palestinian carrying an Austrian passport, has been held at Ben Gurion airport outside Tel Aviv since his arrival from Austria Sunday night, said Rania Ilyas, head of one of the groups which invited Mr. Abbadi.

"Israeli officials informed us that the interior ministry gave orders that Abbadi is to be barred from entering Israel for unknown security reasons," said Ms. Ilyas, head of the Arab east Jerusalem-based cultural group Yabus.

"They have said they will return him to Austria tonight, despite requests by the Austrian embassy that he be allowed entry," she told AFP.

Mr. Abbadi had been invited to give a series of performances in a "Song for Freedom" programme marking the 50th anniversary of the 1948 war which surrounded the creation of Israel, known by Palestinians as Al Nakba.

He was due to perform in Arab east Jerusalem, the West Bank towns of Bethlehem and Ramallah, and the northern Israeli town of Nazareth, Ms. Ilyas said.

"The interior ministry's statements are lies and an attempt to prevent freedom of expression," Mr. Abbadi entered Israel last year for several performances and there was no talk of security problems," Ms. Ilyas said.

Mohammad Yaqub, of the Palestinian National Institute for Music, another organiser of the "Songs for Freedom" programme, called the refusal to allow Mr. Abbadi entry "a racist decision."

"They aim to ruin any Palestinian activities which recall what happened 50 years ago in the Nakba," he said.



Palestinian students at Hebron University, clad in the traditional chequered kofia (scarf), burn the American and Israeli flags Monday during a ceremony in the West Bank town of Hebron to mark the 50th anniversary of 'Al Nakba,' Arabic for 'Catastrophe,' a term Palestinians and Arabs use for the date of the creation of the state of Israel (AFP photo)

Palestinian protesters burn mock Jewish settlement in march

HEBRON (AFP) — Palestinian university students blew up a model of a Jewish settlement during a demonstration here on Monday to mark the 50th anniversary of the "Nakba," Catastrophe, witnesses said.

Several dozen students marched through Hebron University, while a group of students masked in keffiyeh scarves burned a cardboard model of a settlement, then burned Israeli and American flags, witnesses said.

The youth branch of Yasser Arafat's Fateh faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), as well as opposition factions, participated in the demonstration, called to mark the 50th anniversary of the "Nakba," as Palestinians call the 1948 war which surrounded the creation of Israel.

Meanwhile, in the West Bank town of Nablus, some 2,000 children participated in a march in the Balata refugee camp, demanding the right of return for refugees in the occupied territories and neighbouring Arab countries.

Three masked men led the march, firing Kalashnikovs in the air, witnesses said.

"This march is a message of anger to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, to remind him that all our options are open," said Tayser Nasrallah, the top official for refugees in Nablus, in a speech to the crowd.

The Committee for the Protection of Refugees' Rights, which called the march, distributed a statement demanding that Palestinian National Authority "call a halt to negotiations and security cooperation with Israel."

The authority "must assure the right of refugees to return by declaring the creation of a Palestinian state," the statement said.

The fate of the 3.5 million Palestinian refugees in the region is supposed to be determined in negotiations for a final peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians.

Iran, Iraq launch joint search for remains of dead soldiers

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran and Iraq began a joint search Monday for the remains of soldiers killed close to their common border during their 1980-1988 war, Iran's state radio announced.

Ten Iranian military officers, equipped with heavy instruments, searched just inside Iraq in a first survey, the radio said.

An Iraqi team is expected here shortly for similar searches in Iranian territory, the radio said.

It described the cooperation as "very important" in determining the fate of those listed as missing-in-action (MIA) in the eight-year conflict.

Another Iranian team conducted a search Monday along the border river of Arvandrud (Shatt Al Arab), according to the radio report.

The question of prisoners of war (PoWs) and the MIA was long a stumbling bloc to improved ties between the two neighbours.

But the two countries have reached a settlement and been moving quickly in resolving both issues. They exchanged large numbers of PoWs in the past weeks and are to exchange more on May 15 to permanently close the PoWs file.

The remains of 39,230 Iranian soldiers have been found since the end of the war, which killed around 300,000 Iranians and left another 500,000 wounded, most of them as invalids.

Dozens of members of Iranian search teams have been killed in mine explosions during search operations for missing soldiers.

Japanese chief of staff visits Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The chief of Japan's army, General Yuji Fujinawa, held talks with Israel's Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai Monday on Middle East peace efforts and threats from weapons of mass destruction in the region, the Israeli defence ministry said.

Mr. Fujinawa arrived in Israel Sunday for a three-day visit and to inspect Japanese troops participating in U.N. peacekeeping forces on the Golan Heights.

During their talks, Mr. Mordechai briefed the Japanese official on Israel's proposals to withdraw from the buffer zone it occupies in south Lebanon if Beirut will take steps to prevent cross-border guerrilla attacks, the ministry said in a statement.

Mr. Mordechai also expressed Israel's interest in resuming peace talks with Syria after a break of more than two years, it said.

The two men also discussed "the threat of missiles and chemical and biological weapons" development in the region, it said.

Israel has accused both Syria and Iran of developing non-conventional weapons and missiles capable of delivering them to the Jewish state.

Gen. Fujinawa was scheduled to meet Tuesday with his Israeli counterpart, General Amnon Shabak, and to visit the headquarters of Israel's northern command before leaving on Wednesday, the army said.

Nearly 100 PKK rebels killed by Turkish army in two weeks

ANKARA (AFP) — Ninety-nine Kurdish rebels from the separatist Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) have been killed by Turkish security forces in the past two weeks, officials said Monday.

Nine rebels were wounded and 14 captured during the latest Turkish offensive in the east and south-east of the country, according to security officials quoted by Anatolia news agency.

The PKK has been fighting since 1984 to carve out an independent Kurdish state in Southeast Turkey. More than 29,000 people have died in violence related to the PKK rebellion.

Three dead, 20 injured in attack on train south of Algiers

ALGIERS (AP) — Three travellers were killed and 20 injured in a bomb attack on a train south of Algiers, hospital workers said Monday.

The official death toll in Sunday's attack was two. The attackers were not identified, though Islamists were suspected.

The attack took place near Boufarik, 35 kilometres south of the capital. The hospital officials, speaking on customary anonymity, said two of the injured were in serious condition.

Booby-trapped corpse kills self-defence guard

ALGIERS (AFP) — A member of an Algerian civilian self-defence group was killed and another person wounded by a booby-trapped corpse in Sidi Naamane, south of Algiers, the Al Watan newspaper reported Monday. The self-defence guard was killed immediately Sunday after triggering a bomb that had been placed under the body of an old man whose throat had been cut by suspected Islamist militants, the newspaper said. A civilian standing nearby was seriously injured in the blast. Another two bombs were defused Sunday in Algiers, the daily Le Matin reported.

The violence near Algiers came a day after a bomb exploded near a Turkish bathhouse in a working class neighbourhood, injuring as many as 30 people and breaking a two-month lull in attacks on the capital. There was no claim of responsibility, but suspicion fell on the Armed Islamic Group.

FM apologises for Croatia's World War II persecution of Jews

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic issued an emotional apology Monday for the persecution of Jews under his country's pro-Nazi Ustashi regime during World War II.

"Relying on its freedom-loving and anti-Fascist roots, the modern democratic Croatia in the strongest possible terms condemns Fascism, racial hatred, xenophobia and anti-Semitism," Mr. Granic said during a visit to the Yad Vashem memorial to the six million Jews killed in the Holocaust.

"I express and testify to the deepest regret and condemnation of the persecution, suffering and the tragedy of the Jews on Croatian territory under the Ustashi regime," said Mr. Granic, who is also deputy prime minister.

Mr. Granic arrived late Sunday for the highest level visit to Israel by a Croatian official since the two nations established diplomatic relations in September.

He was due to meet later Monday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and sign a series of cooperation agreements on civil aviation and tourism.

Israel refused to recognise Croatia when it gained independence from Belgrade in 1991 because of a book by Croatian President Franjo Tudjman which played down the role of the Ustashi regime in the extermination of tens of thousands of Jews.

It finally established ties after Mr. Tudjman published an excised English translation of his book and his government issued a statement apologising for the crimes of the Fascist regime.

Mr. Granic returned to the theme during his visit to the Yad Vashem memorial and museum, saying the facility was "an eternal warning that such crimes must not happen again."

"Here the memory is kept of all those who risked and gave their lives to save their Jewish brothers and mankind against the atrocity of Nazi madness," he said.

"On behalf of the government of Croatia and with deepest respect for the victims of the Holocaust, I express eternal condemnation of the crime of genocide of six million Jews," he said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10Cartoon — Pro Stars
15:30 Small Talk — "Quiz Show"
16:00Drama Bordertown
16:30 Doc. — The Health Show
17:00Route of Capricorn
18:00French Programmes
19:00Le Journal
19:15French Programme
19:30News headlines
19:35 Step by Step — "Three Girls and Baby"
20:10What Would You Do?
20:30Encounter
21:30Drama — Rhodes
22:00News in English
22:30 Feature Film — "The Heart of the Lie"
23:45Metro Cafe

PRAYER TIMES

04:08Fajr
05:46(Sunrise) Duha
12:32Dhuhr
16:12Asr
19:28Maghreb
20:55Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740

Assemblies of God Church Tel.

4632785

St. Joseph Church Tel.

4624590

Terra Sancta Church Tel.

4622366

Anglican Church Tel.

4624853/4624811

St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel.

771751

Amman International Church Tel.

865897

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel.

5688404

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel.

811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel.

4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel.

5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel.

4646138

Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel.

5920146

The Uniate Catholic Church Tel.

4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel.

4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel.

892679

The Baptist Church Tel.

4628052

The Armenian Catholic

Church Tel. 771331

The American Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers particularly in the northern regions and winds westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate to active, and seas choppy.

Amman11/21

Aqaba18/28

Deserts08/23

Jordan Valley16/28

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 24, Aqaba 30 Humidity readings: Amman 28 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Fakher Bilbeisi5522233

Dr. Abdul Majid Al Sha'ir4391405

Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyem4620115

Dr. Muntah Al Qasbi7799599

Ferdows pharmacy778336

Al Asema pharmacy4637055

Al Salam pharmacy4636730

Yacoub pharmacy4644945

Shmeisani pharmacy4637660

Nairokh pharmacy4623672

IRBID:

Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir76852

Al Quds pharmacy(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Mazen Saffarini985832

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyem4620115

Dr. Muntah Al Qasbi7799599

Ferdows pharmacy778336

Al Asema pharmacy4637055

Al Salam pharmacy4636730

Yacoub pharmacy4644945

Shmeisani pharmacy4637660

Nairokh pharmacy4623672

IRBID:

Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir76852

Al Quds pharmacy(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Mazen Saffarini985832

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199

The Islamic Abul5661317

Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 86813, 856856

Luzmila4630195

Khalidi Maternity4644281/6

Akileh Maternity4642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity4642362

Mahbas, J. Amman,4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani5607071

Shmeisani Hospital5669131

University Hospital5353444

Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9

Food Control Centre4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade4617101

Blood Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Dept.4630321

Hotel Complaints5605800

Price Complaints5661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Com-

plaints787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101

Aldali Tel. Repairs5661101

Jordan Television773111

Radio Jordan774111

Water Authority5680110

J. Electricity Authority815615

Electric Power Co.4636381

RJ Flight Information44-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport44-53200

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199

The Islamic Abul5661317

Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 86813, 856856

Luzmila4630195

Khalidi Maternity4644281/6

Akileh Maternity4642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity4642362

Mahbas, J. Amman,4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani5607071

Shmeisani Hospital5669131

University Hospital5353444

Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9

Food Control Centre4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade4617101

Blood Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Dept.4630321

Hotel Complaints5605800

Price Complaints5661176

Exit poll gives Estrada lead in the Philippines

MANILA (R) — Millions voted in the Philippines Monday for a new president in one of the world's rowdiest democracies, and an exit poll released just before voting ended suggested a big win for former movie star Joseph Estrada.

Voting was largely peaceful, but polling in one province was marred by gun battles killing at least three people and preventing tens of thousands from casting their ballots, officials said.

Police said the deaths in the province of Lanao del Sur on the southern island of Mindanao brought to 39 the number of people killed in a sometimes bitter election campaign. Police said earlier Monday the toll was 32.

Election officials put the turnout by noon at 65 per cent and forecast an overall 80 per cent, despite searing tropical temperatures of up to 38 Celsius.

At stake were more than 17,000 positions from president and members of congress to provincial governors and councilors.

An exit poll released shortly before polls closed at 3 p.m. (0700 GMT) showed Mr. Estrada far ahead of his nine rivals. Private radio station DZRH conducted the poll.

It said 36.1 per cent of 13,491 people it polled around the country said they voted for Mr. Estrada, more than double the 18 per cent for de Mr. Venecia, his nearest rival.

Actual results of the election are not expected to be known for about two weeks. About 34 million voters are registered and their ballots are counted manually.

A citizens' watchdog designated to carry out an unofficial vote count hopes to tally 90 per cent of the results in 10 days.

The armed forces and police were put on high alert to forestall violence during the polls, which outgoing President Fidel Ramos labelled a test of Philippine democracy. Mr. Ramos is barred by the constitution from a second six-year term.

In the scene, the group's chairman Abdulgani Marohombas told Reuters by telephone.

In nearby Malabang town, another person was shot dead and two people wounded when other armed groups supporting rival mayoral candidates opened fire at each other.

In five towns in the province more than 40,000 voters were unable to vote either because gunmen roamed near polling centres or blocked roads to prevent delivery of ballot boxes.

In one town, election officials were so scared of the gunmen they fled to another town, Mr. Marohombas said.

Police had identified 425 towns and cities as potential flashpoints because of fierce local rivalries.

Mr. Ramos told reporters he was very, very optimistic about the conduct of generally honest, orderly and peaceful elections.

However, Mr. Estrada's camp warned of mass cheating, saying it was the only way their candidate could lose.

If somebody's going to cheat, it's going to be now, said Senator Orlando Mercado, an Estrada spokesman. It's now that they're preparing the ballot sheets so we have to watch out.

Commentators said it was crucial the poll be regarded as clean and fair abroad.

The Philippines needs to be perceived by the outside world as politically stable if it is not to be totally engulfed by the financial crisis battering the region, the Manila standard said in an editorial. It is therefore imperative that today's elections be clean and honest.



Filipino children wear cardboard masks of opposition presidential candidate Joseph Estrada outside a polling station in Manila. An exit poll released towards the end of Monday's Philippine presidential election showed widely favoured Estrada far in front of his nine rivals (Reuters photo)

France accused of concealing N-test medical reports

SUVA (AFP) — Two French Polynesian anti-nuclear campaigners claimed Monday that fellow countrymen are dying from nuclear contamination and nuclear test site workers are denied the right to see their medical reports.

French Polynesian pro-independence activists Ronald Oldham and Edouard Huriore are in Fiji to rally support for a campaign to press France authorities to hand over medical reports to 15,000 people who worked at the Mururoa Atoll test site.

The two also want an independent study of radioactivity on the islands. French authorities vigorously denied their claims Monday.

Mr. Huriore, who worked at Mururoa for nine years to 1988, told reporters he was required to undergo a medical examination every 15 days but was not shown any of his medical reports.

lagoon is not contaminated but we were forbidden to eat it.

"Some people stole the fish. I was one of them. I can say the fish is poisoned because after eating it, I got very itchy and really dizzy," he claimed.

"Many of my friends who worked with me in Mururoa are dying while the French are claiming it is safe."

The visit by the pair precedes the expected release next month of a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on radioactivity on Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls.

France ended its nuclear testing on the islands in February 1996, under intense international pressure.

Mr. Oldham told AFP: "There is secrecy on the health issue. This is still very strong even two years after nuclear testing was stopped."

Mr. Huriore said the French government had announced that medical reports would be made available to workers on request but in Papeete health authorities were not responding to workers' requests to see reports.

The two claimed 90 per cent of workers underwent medical examination before starting work on the test sites but only 48 per cent were examined after finishing work.

Anti-Taleban alliance steps up internecine struggle over key city

KABUL (AFP) — Two member factions of Afghanistan's anti-Taleban alliance have stepped up their internal and violent struggle for control of the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, sources told AFP Monday.

According to witnesses, troops loyal to ex-Communist warlord Abdul Rashid Dostam have taken control of all entry points into the city in their ongoing attempt to oust the powerful Shiite Muslim Hezbi-Wahdat group.

The sources said Dostam's Jumbesh faction — previously the strongest group in the ethnic-Uzbek city — has established a stronghold around the dusty anti-Taleban base in an attempt to drive its rivals out.

"The city is currently quiet but there have been sporadic outbreaks of serious fighting during the last week and the situation is still extremely tense," an independent source said.

Mr. Dostam's troops have been posted at a key junction on the east-bound highway close to the city airport, while fighters backed by heavy armour have been sighted to the south and west.



Filipino children wear cardboard masks of opposition presidential candidate Joseph Estrada outside a polling station in Manila. An exit poll released towards the end of Monday's Philippine presidential election showed widely favoured Estrada far in front of his nine rivals (Reuters photo)

Tibetan exile march, urged

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A group of Tibetan exiles in India have urged the Chinese government to allow a Tibetan exile march to the border of China.

EBRD chiefs for Chernobyl

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) leaders called on Monday to urgently fund the damaged Chernobyl nuclear reactor, in order to prevent a fresh disaster.

EBRD said unless a structure was built to contain the shattered number of the consequences of the world would be incalculable.

Bosnia's armies trained to clear mines they left behind

TRAVNIK, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AFP) — Midhat Skender, 28, puts on a heavy flak-jacket and helmet as he goes out to a mock minefield for training with a mine detector.

It's not a new job for him — he cleared many mines during the Bosnian war — but his gear is "We would go to the minefields in jeans and tennis shoes," he recalled. "We did not have protective equipment."

Skender is one of 28 soldiers in Bosnia's mainly Muslim Federation Army who this month are undergoing a 21-day mine clearing training programme at one of three centres set up in March and sponsored by the U.S. government.

month. war. They kill or maim 50 people a month. Up till now mine clearing has been done by various civilian agencies supervised by the United Nations.

The aim is to shift more of the work to Bosnia's three armies, but the soldiers in the field know that their civilian counterparts get better pay and insurance benefits.

"Our main concern is that once these soldiers are trained they will find better-paying jobs with some other organisation," said Major Sejmin Jazmin, commander of the unit that is undergoing training in Travnik.

Indian PM intervenes in bid to end nurses strike

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee launched an initiative Monday to end a nurses' strike which has disrupted hospitals and organisers claim is starting to spread outside New Delhi.

The Press Trust of India, quoting official sources, said the premier asked his parliamentary affairs minister, Madan Lal Khurana, to begin talks with nurses to end the week-long strike.

"Talks are in progress to reach an amicable settlement," said a source close to Mr. Khurana, a former Delhi chief minister who averted a similar nurses' strike three years ago.

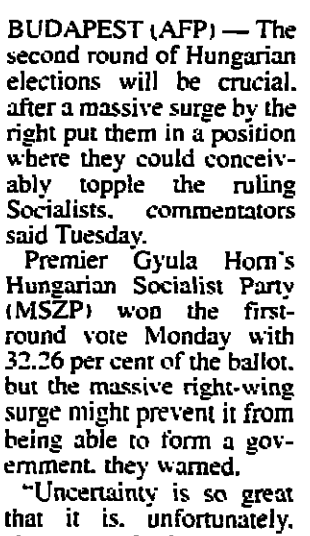
Second round crucial after right surges in Hungarian ballots

BUDAPEST (AFP) — The second round of Hungarian elections will be crucial, after a massive surge by the right put them in a position where they could conceivably topple the ruling Socialists, commentators said Tuesday.

Premier Gyula Horn's Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) won the first-round vote Monday with 32.26 per cent of the ballot, but the massive right-wing surge might prevent it from being able to form a government, they warned.

"Uncertainty is so great that it is, unfortunately, almost certain that the next two weeks will be ruled by nervousness," said the largest-circulation Nepszabadsag.

Second round crucial after right surges in Hungarian ballots



Istvan Csúrka, head of the nationalist right-wing Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP), talks to journalists (Reuters photo)

The right-wing opposition Federation of Young Democrats-Hungarian Civic Party (Fidesz-MPP) came in second behind the Socialists with 28.20 per cent of the vote Sunday.



Istvan Csúrka, head of the nationalist right-wing Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP), talks to journalists (Reuters photo)

And it might depose the outgoing social-liberal coalition if it can better organise its supporters for the second round, scheduled for May 24, Nepszabadsag warned.



Istvan Csúrka, head of the nationalist right-wing Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP), talks to journalists (Reuters photo)

"If none of them can form a majority government, then we shall get to know what party programs are really worth," the paper added.

"Whichever wins, can count on a very powerful opposition," said Nepszabadsag.

Under Hungarian law, the president asks the winner of the elections to form a government, but parliament must approve the prime minister. A powerful opposition can thus simply block the creation of a minority government.

Arrested British-Australian faces charges in Myanmar

BANGKOK (AFP) — British and Australian diplomats are pushing for better consular access to their dual-citizen detained in Myanmar for allegedly collaborating with an outlawed resistance group, officials said Monday.

The British and Australian embassies are seeking joint consular access and we were in the court this morning," Australian Ambassador to Myanmar Lyndall McLean told AFP by telephone from Yangon (Rangoon).

James Rupert Russell Mawdsley, 25, a citizen of both Britain and Australia, is facing illegal entry charges after being arrested on April 30 near the Thai border, shortly after crossing into Myanmar without a visa or passport.

Sources said Mr. Mawdsley had appeared in a Yangon court Monday but the proceedings were adjourned until Wednesday.

"We have been allowed to meet him but so far we have been a bit disappointed with the consular access and we are pushing for longer meetings with him," Mr. McLean said.

Sources said Mr. Mawdsley had complained to embassy officials of being poorly treated while in custody.

The prosecution alleged Mr. Mawdsley had been handing out pamphlets from the Thai-based All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), a democracy group labelled "terrorists" by Myanmar's ruling junta, sources said.

Last week a state-run newspaper in Yangon said Mr. Mawdsley was a "mercenary terrorist" who had crossed the border "with the intent to cause disturbances to disrupt stability of the state."

to embassy officials of being poorly treated while in custody.

The prosecution alleged Mr. Mawdsley had been handing out pamphlets from the Thai-based All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), a democracy group labelled "terrorists" by Myanmar's ruling junta, sources said.

Last week a state-run newspaper in Yangon said Mr. Mawdsley was a "mercenary terrorist" who had crossed the border "with the intent to cause disturbances to disrupt stability of the state."



Tibetans shout anti-Chinese slogans during a protest march outside the United Nations office in New Delhi. More than 100 activists from India and Nepal took part in the protest to show their solidarity with five fellow activists who are on a hunger-strike seeking independence for their homeland under Chinese occupation (Reuters photo)

Tibetan exiles stage protest march, urge U.N. to act

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Around 100 Tibetan exiles marched on the United Nations office here Monday to demand the world body for doing "nothing" to restore their homeland's independence from China.

Monks and nuns joined other exiles in shouting anti-Chinese slogans before handing over several memorandums addressed to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan.

One statement said that while the U.N. had done a "commendable job in some parts of the world" it had done "nothing, absolutely nothing, substantial to save Tibet."

"It is because China, the perpetrator of Tibet's suffering, is a big nation and member of the U.N."

Security Council?" it said, adding: "If the United Nations lets its decisions be influenced by such considerations, the world will lose faith in it."

Another memorandum by a women's group appealed: "Don't let down the suffering people on this earth. The United Nations is supposed to be the conscience of the civilised world. Do something to live up to this image."

A third letter said it was important to back the Tibetan cause for independence as "many people in the world look to Tibetans for guidance and peace."

Tibetan activists have asked the U.N. to "promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Tibet and initiate a U.N.-sponsored

plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the Tibetan people."

They have also called for a "special rapporteur to investigate the situation of human rights in Chinese-occupied Tibet."

Late last month, a Tibetan monk immolated himself in New Delhi in the first suicide protest in India after police broke up a marathon hunger strike by six Tibetans in support of Tibetan independence. Five others have replaced them and were still fasting on Monday.

Chinese troops occupied Tibet in 1951. The Dalai Lama and some 100,000 Tibetans fled to India after Beijing crushed an anti-Chinese uprising in Tibet in 1959.

EBRD chiefs appeal for cash for Chernobyl sarcophagus

KIEV (AFP) — The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) leaders appealed to the international community Monday to urgently find millions of dollars to seal the crumbling sarcophagus encasing the damaged Chernobyl nuclear reactor, in order to avert a fresh disaster.

Charles Frank, acting president of EBRD, said unless a new structure was built to enclose the shattered number four reactor, the consequences for the world would be unimaginable.

Mr. Frank said the Chernobyl Shelter Fund programme managed by the EBRD needed some \$760 million, but only \$400 millions has so far been raised, he said. "If we fail to raise the necessary funds, the consequences for the world are too horrible to imagine," he warned the annual general meeting of the EBRD's board of governors, which is meeting here.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma said his country needed the \$200-\$300 billion to tackle the fallout of the April 1986 accident, which sent clouds of radiation over much of Ukraine and Eastern Europe.

The accident, triggered by an explosion in the plant's number four reactor, remains the world's worst civilian nuclear disaster to date.

"Just the direct irreversible losses of Ukraine caused by the Chernobyl disaster amount to \$120 billion to \$130 billion, which exceeds the revenue part of the Ukrainian budget six times," Mr. Kuchma said.

Belgian Finance Minister Philippe Maystadt, the current chairman of the EBRD board of governors, said the Soviet-designed nuclear reactors at Chernobyl and other ex-Soviet bloc states were "probably the most dreadful legacy of the former Communist regimes."

Ukraine has been clamour-

ing for international funds to build a new sarcophagus on top of the existing structure, and finance construction of two nuclear power plants to compensate for the promised closure of the Chernobyl complex.

Ukraine wants cash for plants in Rivne and Khmelnytsky, but the EBRD has so far balked at the projects' \$1.2 billion price tag, preferring Ukraine to modernise its 14 oil- and coal-fired power stations to make up for power shortfalls.

Saturday, Ukrainian Prime Minister Yushchenko said Kiev would not close Chernobyl down in 2000 as planned unless the Group of Seven industrialised nations released the necessary funds.

In 1995, Ukraine and the G7 signed an agreement to close down Chernobyl in 2000 in exchange for \$3.1 billion in aid from the G7.

Military drills start in eastern Taiwan

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwanese forces embarked on a military exercise Monday but officials sought to downplay the sea- and land-based drills to avoid angering Beijing.

"The exercise kicked off in Hualien and Taitung and on the sea off that area," a military spokesman said.

He said the drills, code-named Han Kuang 14 (Han Glory), were a routine attempt to review the military's training and combat capability.

Reserve units were mobilised in the first series of exercises ever held in eastern Taiwan, local television reported.

The spokesman confirmed reports that a submarine was found spying on the drills Friday, during which a French-made Mica medium range air-to-air missile was fired from a Mirage 2000-5.

The missile destroyed the target — a mock Su-27 of the Chinese air force — dozens of

miles away. "An unidentified submarine was indeed discovered on the open sea east of Taiwan, but it left after its operation was exposed," he said.

He played down significance of the incident as "passage of submarines in the open seas is normal and routine," without elaboration.

Quoting military sources, the China Times said it was a U.S. Los Angeles-class attack submarine.

It was the first time the Mica had been tested outside Taiwan. Taiwan has bought 960 of the missiles.

Lin Yu-Fang, parliamentarian of the opposition New Party, insisted that any foreign ship spying on the drills should be regarded as a mock enemy, and closely monitor it, regardless of its nationality. Washington is the largest arms supplier to the island.

Mr. Lin, a military expert, said the submarine was in the

exercise area to gather information about the weaponry made by France, a chief competitor of the U.S. on the international arms market.

MP Lee Ming-Kao of the ruling Kuomintang gave credit to the navy for detecting the submarine. There has been criticism here that Taiwan is deficient in anti-submarine capability.

"If the report proves to be true, it shows the military has brought into full play the new weapons they have acquired," despite the quietness of the nuclear-fuelled submarine, Mr. Lee said.

In an apparent bid to protect delicate Taipei-Beijing ties, the spokesman requested that the drills should "not be associated with other matters."

Taipei sent negotiators to Beijing last month on the first fence-mending trip in almost three years, after China sent a letter to Taiwan agreeing to resume visits by negotiators.

Cook under attack over arms-to-Sierra Leone scandal

LONDON (AFP) — British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook Monday faced a barrage of criticism over the arms-to-Sierra Leone scandal, blamed for the biggest crisis in Prime Minister Tony Blair's 12-month Labour administration.

Mr. Cook's political reputation was on the line, accused at best of gross incompetence over his apparent ignorance about the British government's role in a sanctions-busting counter-coup in Sierra Leone, or at worst of lying to parliament that he knew nothing about it.

The foreign secretary, one of the three "big-hitters" in the Labour administration, is not seen as likely to lose his job now, but the scandal could badly undermine Mr. Cook's long-term position.

Tuesday, he will face a grueling 60 minutes of questioning in parliament, with the opposition Tories determined to put him

under the spotlight over the affair.

"Robin Cook is widely regarded as one of the ablest members of the Labour government. He is also one of its biggest disappointments," wrote the highly-respected Financial Times business daily.

The controversy confronts Labour, which launched a much-heralded "ethical" foreign policy after sweeping to power last May, with a scandal that could rival the arms-to-Iraq affair, which was brilliantly exploited by Mr. Cook in opposition to help topple the Tories.

Ironically, the government's alleged support for a firm of mercenaries that helped to restore elected President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, ousted in a military coup in May 1997, was for a good cause.

Britain's High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold, alleged to have suggested that Kabbah approach

Sandline International, a British firm of military consultants, to supply guns for the counter-coup, is a hero in Freetown.

But the action, in which 30 tonnes of guns and ammunition were flown from Bulgaria in February to local forces in Sierra Leone, was in defiance of a U.N. arms embargo.

Three possible explanations for the embarrassing debacle were suggested in the British press Monday.

Either Mr. Cook and his deputy, Tony Lloyd, were lying when they told parliament they were not aware of Foreign Office involvement in the operation by Sandline to provide arms to pro-Kabbah forces.

Or information about the counter-coup was passed up through the line of command towards ministers, but they did not read it.

Or else officials deliberately conspired to keep ministers in the dark.

Despite disbelief that the foreign secretary could

have been unaware of an operation that Sandline claims had been sanctioned by senior Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence officials, many commentators tend to the view that Mr. Cook failed to read his ministerial briefings.

"I have recognised that you can be a successful foreign secretary if you focus on the big questions and not necessarily if you finish the paperwork," he said tellingly in a BBC interview earlier this year.

Although not a cause for immediate resignation, Mr. Cook's apparent lack of grasp over his own department's affairs is a damning indictment for a man who has been caught up in repeated controversies over the last 12 months, including efforts to replace his official secretary with his lover (now wife) and a diplomatically disastrous visit to Israel in March.

Mr. Lloyd, his number two, who has a special responsibility for Africa,

may be first in the firing-line: he visited Sierra Leone in March, yet claimed ignorance about the affair until May 1, later retracting this to admit he knew already in mid-April.

There are already two inquiries ordered into the affair, a criminal one under the Customs and Excise Department and an independent inquiry promised by Mr. Cook, which will make its findings public.

If the government did sanction the counter-coup, Sandline could be in the absurd situation of facing prosecution for a sanctions-busting operation carried out with official approval.

This would be a mirror image of the arms-to-Iraq affair, which burst into the open in 1992 when the trial of a British tool machinery company which had broken an arms embargo to Iraq in the late 1980s collapsed sensationally, after evidence emerged that the Tory government had connived in the exports.

Italian mudslide death toll climbs to 124

ROME (AFP) — The toll in last week's devastating mudslides in the Campania region of southern Italy has risen to 124, the Italian civil defence service said Monday.

More bodies were hauled from mountains of mud in Sarno, the town worst hit by the disaster, taking the toll there to 103. Ninety-seven of the victims were given a mass funeral service in the town's stadium Sunday.

The number of dead in the other badly-hit villages remained the same.

No definite figure for the number of people still missing was available. Late Friday officials in Rome put the figure at 107, down from the estimates of 200 given earlier in the day. But local authorities and emergency services at the scene said a more realistic figure was between 300 and 400.

Monday was declared a national day of mourning.

Lithuanian ship attacked by pirates in Indian Ocean

MOSCOW (AFP) — Pirates attacked a Lithuanian merchant vessel in the Indian Ocean at the weekend, seriously wounding one of the officers on board, Interfax news agency reported Monday.

The Algirdas, en route from Calcutta to Singapore, was 40 miles off the Thai island of Puket when it was waylaid by a smaller vessel carrying some 25 pirates.

Ten armed men boarded the ship and opened fire on the crew, shooting the second-in-command through the throat, Interfax said, citing officials in the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda.

The pirates tied the crew to the ship's rail and smashed the ship's radio, before stealing any personal belongings and other valuables they could find.

After they left the ship one of the crew managed to free himself and send out an alert on a portable telephone.

Kosovo leader fears radicalisation among separatists

PRISTINA (AFP) — One of the main Kosovo Albanian leaders, Mahmut Bakalli, has said that he fears a radicalisation of the separatist movement because of the current lack of dialogue with Belgrade.

"I fear that the doctrine of a peaceful solution (for the crisis), supported by Ibrahim Rugova, will fail if we do not hurry up and start a dialogue," Mr. Bakalli told AFP Sunday.

Mr. Bakalli, a former Communist leader, is one of the most influential personalities in Kosovo.

Mr. Rugova, Kosovo's unofficial president, has included him in his team for possible talks with Belgrade on the status of the troubled Serbian province, whose population is 90 per cent ethnic Albanian.

A majority of the population has been demanding independence for the province, whose autonomy Belgrade revoked in 1989.

Mr. Bakalli stressed the

importance of negotiations, in order to "marginalise those who are trying to solve the problem by force."

He said the conflict in Kosovo was "a big test for the international community, which will show if it is capable of preventing a war by economic, diplomatic and political means."

"I hope that it will not come to the worst option, to prevent by force an escalation of war," Mr. Bakalli said.

He warned that political parties and other legitimate ethnic Albanian bodies had no control over "important groups of Albanians who have taken up arms to obtain freedom."

A part of the Kosovo youth "have lost patience and started activities which, among the majority of youngsters, have created an illusion that freedom can be reached by violence," Mr. Bakalli said.

This has meant that the

underground Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK), regarded by Belgrade as a terrorist movement, "has become a model for collective identification for a part of young people."

"The UCK is not a serious military formation," Mr. Bakalli opined, however. He said it was not the armed wing of any political party or legitimate body of the Kosovo republic, self-proclaimed by Kosovo Albanians in 1992.

The clandestine UCK rebels have claimed responsibility for a series of deadly attacks on Serbian targets and Albanians loyal to the Belgrade regime.

"The UCK men do not like Rugova and they have organised a sort of militant and violent action, since they want to distance themselves from Rugova's peaceful policy," Mr. Bakalli said.

"These young people are at the barricades, and they will cut your eyes out if you

mention Rugova," Mr. Bakalli added.

He believed that the Kosovo Albanian political parties "control the essential front of Albanian people."

"But if a political dialogue is postponed, the spiral of violence will continue," Mr. Bakalli warned.

For him, one thing is certain: "The Serbian state cannot rule the two million Albanians" who make up 90 per cent of the population of the province.

Any solution by which two million Albanians remained under Serbian state jurisdiction is not possible, as they could not be pacified under a Serbian state, Mr. Bakalli said.

But he opposed any modification of the borders in the region. He proposed creation of "a federation or confederation" in which Kosovo would have the same status as the republics of Serbia and Montenegro which now form Federal Yugoslavia.

Arrest warrant out for Bhutto

KARACHI (AFP) — A Pakistani high court issued an arrest warrant for former Premier Benazir Bhutto Monday after her failure to appear in a case of alleged administrative corruption, court officials said.

Justice Ghous Mohammad of the Sindh High Court issued the non-bailable warrant after Ms. Bhutto, Pakistan's main opposition leader, failed to show up when he resumed the hearing, they said.

Ms. Bhutto is currently on a private trip to Canada, the United States and Britain and expected to return here this week, party sources said.

The judge dismissed the application of her counsel, Reza Rabbani that Ms. Bhutto was abroad and he could not tell her the date of the case.

The judge adjourned the hearing until May 19.

In a similar situation last month, the same judge issued bailable warrants against Ms. Bhutto. However when she appeared in court he accepted her plea to adjourn the case until her return in early May.

Ms. Bhutto's three-year old government was sacked in November 1996 on charges of corruption and misrule.

An accountability bureau, set up by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government, has filed a case in the high court accusing Ms. Bhutto supporters of finding jobs at Pakistan International Airlines for party members, in violation of the rules.

Opposition urges absent Suharto to step down to end violence

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesia's main opposition figures, including an outspoken Muslim leader, turned up the heat on President Suharto Monday urging an end to his 32-year rule and pledging to unite the forces calling for reform.

The calls came as an absent Mr. Suharto appealed for Indonesians to make more sacrifices in a speech to a meeting of G15 developing nations in Cairo.

"There is no other choice, I would tell him (Suharto). It is enough to go this far. Do not cling on because it may lead to daily bloody clashes," Amien Rais, the outspoken leader of the 28-million strong Muhammadiyah Islamic movement said.

To loud applause from some 2,000 people thronged in a sports hall for a celebration to mark a meeting of a Muhammadiyah-affiliated women's organisation, Mr. Rais said the government had lost the people's trust.

Students and the population had found the courage to demand a change in the national leadership, he said.

Students, who have been protesting in towns across Indonesia since February to demand immediate reforms, have upped the ante in recent days and included calls for Mr. Suharto to step down.

Some of the rallies have turned violent, with clashes with security forces leaving at least two dead and hundreds injured in past weeks.

Riots and looting have pushed the unconfirmed death toll to nine.

The "Group of Oct. 28", gathering several leading critics and members of the opposition and dissident movement, earlier Monday called on the legislative assembly to reverse its March decision to appoint Mr. Suharto as president and Bacharuddin Yusuf Habibie as vice president for 1998-2003.

A statement signed by 39 members of the group also said it was setting up a national committee to coordinate support for reforms.

The People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) should reverse the March appointments "if it really respects the aspirations and interests of the people," said Supeni, a former ambassador under the late President Sukarno, reading a statement addressed to the people of Indonesia. If the assembly retains the two leaders then "all form and level of comprehensive reform which we have fought for will have been useless."

The Oct. 28 group also includes Mr. Rais and ousted opposition figure Megawati Sukarnoputri. However, their signatures were not among the 39 names on the statement, which included many respected former politicians and government officials including Ali Sadikin, the former governor of Jakarta.

The statement also slammed the 1,000-member assembly for accepting Mr. Suharto's account of

his last five years in office which "gave the impression that he is escaping responsibility from all the problems that have taken place."

Accepting the speech was "a big mistake or even a tragedy for the nation's history," Mr. Supeni said.

Mr. Suharto, 76, who has ruled with an iron grip for more than three decades, was reappointed by the assembly, which is packed with his own cronies and loyalists and only meets every five years.

"Indonesia must implement big and comprehensive reforms in the fields of the economy and finance with the cooperation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)," Mr. Suharto told a summit of the Group of 15 developing nations.

"For this to be accomplished we must make huge sacrifices," he said.

Mr. Suharto's leadership has come under mounting attack for its handling of the crippling economic crisis which has seen the rupiah plunge and the cost of staple goods skyrocket.

Mr. Rais said the crisis faced by Indonesia was no longer a mere crisis of the economy but a crisis of confidence. "People's trust in the government is no longer there," Mr. Rais said to the deafening applause and shouts of "it is true" in the sports hall in central Jakarta.

Mr. Rais was among the few Indonesians who publicly dared to challenge Mr. Suharto's sole candidacy for the current presidential term.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1995.
مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية - مؤسسة صحفية مستقلة تنشر الجريدة باللغة الإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
ABDUL SALAM TARAWNEH

Vice Chairman & Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
Telephones: 5684311, 5699634, 5667171, 5603585
Facsimile: 5696183

Ads: Fax 5693337

E-mail: jortimes@go.com.jo

Web Sites: http://accessme.com/JordanTimes/

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Better use of deputies' time

THE EXTRAORDINARY session of Parliament, expected to convene in early June, is an important one because it enables the House to review a great number of draft laws that will be included on its agenda.

Some of these draft laws are crucial to furthering the Kingdom's democratic march and developing the economy. The legislation Parliament is expected to tackle includes elections, press, anti-trust and labour laws.

While we trust that the deputies will carry out their duties as true and responsible representatives of the people, we cannot but notice that since the extraordinary session is being held, the four-month regular term of Parliament does not provide enough time for the House to dispense of its duties. The great number of temporary laws from past years that the House did not have the opportunity to discuss is a striking reminder that Parliament should sit longer than four months, if not the whole year.

Extraordinary sessions have been a useful practice in the past. But the amount of work and issues that require deputies' attention demands that the term of ordinary sessions be extended to meet the needs of the more advanced stage of our democratic life.

In recent years, the political debate has widened, citizens have become more politically aware and involved, and political, economic and technological developments have posed new challenges for all of us, not least for Parliament.

In a functioning democracy, the legislative should not be absent when the executive authority works full time all year round and the judicial only breaks for one month during summer.

Most parliaments in advanced democracies sit for most of the year. The U.S. Congress, for example, convenes 11 months every year. In most European countries, parliaments sit for two or three ordinary sessions with only a short recess period between them.

Our Constitution, which remains an example for many nations in the region, states that the nation is "the source of all powers" (Article 24). The representatives should therefore be given ample time to carry out their responsibilities towards their constituents.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Muness Razzaz Monday said the Arabs should not expect Netanyahu, who slaps the world's greatest power in the face, to respect any peace deals with the Arabs, or respond to calls for complying with the requirements of peace. It would not be strange for Netanyahu to again try to assassinate Khaled Misha'al or other Arab figures as long as there is no power on earth that can deter him from doing so. Razzaz said. The writer said Netanyahu's behaviour reflects the feelings of the majority of the Israeli society which is not oriented towards peace, therefore it is not possible to see peace happening between Israel and the Arab countries. Razzaz recalled that when the Israelis refused to withdraw from Sinai, the Americans asked Egypt to launch a war on the Jewish state to force it to return the occupied territory. But he said there is no chance under the prevailing circumstances that Clinton would follow the same tactics and ask the Palestinians to swell a wave of violence in order to force the Israelis to abandon the occupied Palestinian lands.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Mohammad Subeichi criticised Acting Minister of Information Nasser Lawzi for declining to reveal the name of the Arab country suspected of backing those arrested for their alleged involvement in the recent wave of bombings in Jordan. The writer said the minister also failed to name the nationality of the non-Jordanian suspect arrested by the security forces. It is now up to the Jordanian public to remain guessing which country is harbouring enmity towards Jordan or plotting to destabilise security in the Kingdom added the writer. As to the Islamic group "the Salafis" they are of two categories: one believing in peaceful means for attaining their goals and another which seeks political means to achieve that purpose, and again the public is left guessing about the group said to be involved in the incidents, the writer pointed out. He said the only thing that the minister revealed was the names of suspects and that the General Intelligence Directorate succeeded in arresting all of them except one who is still at large. The writer said the public was frustrated at not being informed of the details as it had been promised, and the doubts and suspicions will therefore continue to shroud the whole affair.

The View from Fourth Circle

Bibi, Hillary, and sorting out theatrics and substance in Arab-Israeli negotiations

Rami G. Khouri

THE CANCELLATION of this week's Clinton-Arafat-Netanyahu summit in Washington is not a breakdown in the Palestinian-Israeli Oslo process negotiations, but rather a sign of the intensity of the negotiations as they close in on the hard, core issues of the conflict in Palestine between Zionism and Arab national rights. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's refusal to attend the Washington summons-summit reflects important aspects of both the substance and the style of the negotiations — how much land will ultimately fall under Palestinian and Israeli sovereignty, and the diplomatic manner of the Americans, Israelis and Palestinians.

The style issue is the easier of the two. Israelis and Palestinians alike will bluff, stall and complicate matters in the short run in order to impress their own political constituencies. The Palestinians led by Yasser Arafat continue to accept virtually any proposal that comes from the Americans, Israelis, and Micronesians — even modest 13.1 per cent proposals — in order to keep achieving small gains that hopefully will result one day in a small state. Hope is a cruel but real partner.

Netanyahu is a different matter. He makes it known that he will not allow himself or his country to be humiliated by being summoned to Washington to sign on a territorial withdrawal that he says poses grave threats to the security of his people. Instead, Netanyahu the shameless and morally slimy politician who responds to power and power alone will agree to go to Washington in several weeks' time to sign a territorial withdrawal that will be only a smoke-and-mirrors repackaging of the agreement that he refused to sign this week. Expediency is also a proven and real partner.

Netanyahu now faces his moment of truth, in the face of pressures from his own people, his coalition partners, the Palestinians and Arabs, the United States, and the rest of the world. He will soon have to show whether he is a visionary statesman and national leader, or a duplicitous, power-hungry animal of the political gutter. Netanyahu, the calculating politician, recognises that most Israelis want the Oslo process to succeed, and in return for true

peace and Arab acceptance they are willing to relinquish most of the Arab lands occupied in the 1967 war. He remembers and sometimes dreams about the massive Israeli parliamentary majority that voted for the Israeli withdrawal from most of Hebron last year, which his own government negotiated. A combined parliamentary and popular Israeli majority for implementing the land-for-peace principle is one that Netanyahu will find impossible to resist. On this important matter of substance — who owns this land? — in the long run both Israelis and Palestinians will keep moving steadily towards a reasonable accommodation with one another and with the broad outlines of the global consensus that the United States represents (by which a sovereign Palestinian mini-state would be born on the West Bank and Gaza lands from which Israel would withdraw permanently). In the immediate short-term, though, the negotiators pause for breath and look behind their political backs, for they have started to approach the difficult crux of the conflict.

In this respect, the United States' role now symbolises two basic issues that have long plagued the peace process: a) the nearly three-decades-old Kissingerian idea that the U.S. must keep Israel very strong and not pressure it, so that a secure and confident Israel ultimately can make concessions to the Arabs on land and sovereignty issues, and b) the central contradiction between Zionism/Israel as a righteous nation and a secure haven for the Jewish people, and Zionism/Israel as a violent historical and geographical extension of 19th Century European exclusivist nationalism, territorial colonialism, and ethnic cleansing and dispossession of native Palestinians.

Israel today is indeed democratic, strong and secure — yet its government demands that all its colonial settlements remain in place and not be threatened by interim withdrawals of more than nine or 11 per cent of the occupied West Bank. Clearly, some of this is theatrical political posturing, in the same spirit as Netanyahu's rejecting the summons to the White House. But the substantive discord over land is not theatrics — it is the central issue at stake in both the current negotiations and in the entire

century-long-span of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The "style" of the current negotiations — the David Bar-Ilan & Hillary Clinton Show gets particularly high ratings — will amuse us for days. The more serious substance of the negotiations has finally exposed the central incompatibility between Jewish security and Jewish colonialism. There is a towering and now more obvious contradiction between Israel wanting to be accepted by the Arabs in the Middle East, and Israel wanting to maintain permanent sovereignty over all the settlements and colonies it has established in Palestinian lands it occupied in 1967. An agreement that allows Israel to keep its settlements and that is forced on the weak Palestinians will surely unravel and lead to greater violence, just like the U.S.-Vietnam and May 1983 Lebanese-Israeli accords unraveled and led to terrible new violence. History, too, alas, is also an irritating partner.

This is not the moment for haste or emotionalism, given that the truly historic and core issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict are now finally on the table. We must separate what is merely entertaining theatrics from what is serious substance in the Arab-Israeli peace process. The U.S. seems now to be exerting relatively strong and public pressure on Israel, measured by the track record of recent history, and we need to find out the results of this rare dynamic. It is unlikely to result in dramatic changes, but it deserves time to play itself out. Israel is increasingly isolating itself from its friends, allies, peace partners, neighbours and adversaries — an almost unprecedented act of diplomatic self-savagery, but with unknown consequences in terms of Israeli behaviour.

The great irony is that a strong Israel celebrating its jubilee year is driving itself into a lonely corner on the eve of the 21st century, because of its insistence on keeping the spoils of 19th century-like colonialism. This is not only ironic, it's also immoral, and untenable — which is precisely why Bibi Netanyahu & His Weirdo Coalition are increasingly isolated, and arguing in public with nice smart ladies like Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Balkanising Palestine

By Suliman Mustafa

"protection." Why?
Who wants to play the fool?

Mission Jerusalem

IT WAS a sight to behold on the TV cable channel C-SPAN. An Israeli Likud MK bemoaning the alleged sorry conditions of Christian Palestinians under the "fundamentalist" reign of the Palestinian (National) Authority (PNA) in traditionally Christian Palestinian towns. A caller introducing himself as a Christian Palestinian informs the right-wing MK the only source of misery fueling any Christian Palestinian exodus from the Holy Land is the brutal Israeli occupation. Before ending his sentence, the caller is cutoff the air and the show continues as if no credible counter argument worthy of consideration was put forth.

What occurred during the C-SPAN interview was not atypical of the one-sided debate over an alleged institutionalised persecution of Christian Arabs in Palestine specifically and other Arab states in general including, of all Arab countries, Syria. Calls for sanctions against the offending regimes are growing louder by the month. But what is the real agenda? So fraught with falsehood and so one-sided is this "debate" that not even Christian Palestinian leaders are asked to voice their views in "defence" of their rights.

The so-called debate is reminiscent of the early pseudo-discourse over Palestinian identity and existence. So cynical are the self-proclaimed guardians of Christian Palestinians almost all of them belong to traditionally virulent anti-Arab organisations. Such organisations never drew lines in the past between Arabs of the Sunni, Shia, Greek Orthodox, Melkite, or any religious persuasion in the Arab World. Typically, they draw their support from extreme right-wing American Christian and Jewish groups. Such groups are associated with the fundamentalist Christian coalition and the Israeli Likud or other Israeli fringe groups.

But so far, and not so surprisingly, no Christian Palestinian of significance in the Arab World or anywhere else, credible or otherwise, has accepted the invitation for

The timing of this campaign is of course not coincidence. The fate of Jerusalem is being determined in Washington and the U.S. media. The Jewish fundamentalists and ultra-nationalists who would like to see little Palestinian control over any part of the occupied territories, let alone Jerusalem, are manoeuvring aggressively on two fronts: First, undermine the PNA's internationally recognised role as the representative of both Christian and Muslim interests in Palestine given its Muslim and Christian citizens. Second, position Israel as the substitute protector of Christian Palestinians and Christian interests in general to court the well-financed and media-strong fundamentalist Christian right to mobilise their followers and lobby for total Israeli control over Jerusalem.

What better way to demonstrate Israel's "caring" for Christian Palestinians than to express concern over their flight from the Holy Land and to paint the PNA as the culprit. The fundamentalist Christians, credulous or calculating, seem to have been persuaded. But for that to occur, Israel needs a fig leaf to cover its historical mistreatment of Christians in Palestine. Without concealing its lackluster track record, Israel cannot claim to be the enlightened pro-Western democracy worthy of the holiest of all cities, Jerusalem. In the absence of a reasonable track record, Israel, as always, is busy rewriting history and fabricating the present.

Who is the intended audience of this campaign of distortion, not the Christian Palestinians (mere pawns to be used and disposed of when they have served their purpose just like their property and human rights) but the fundamentalist Christians of America. And, if in the process Israel can split the ranks of Palestinians into Druze, Islamists, fundamentalists, secularists, Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Armenians, Russian Orthodox, et cetera,

so much the better. Israel's best case scenario, and Palestinians' worst case scenario, is the Balkanisation of Palestine and an Israeli orchestrated intervention reminiscent of Syria's intervention and de facto control of Lebanon under the guise of controlling sectarian violence.

Then Israel can demonstrate to the world community that an unstable Palestinian entity "is a real and present danger to Israel's security and its neighbours. You can kiss goodbye for decades a Palestinian entity along U.N. Resolution 242. Even moderate Israelis would balk at the thought of a Bosnia in their midst that could spill over to their territory. By and large this scenario is quite far-fetched but the Israelis will go for it anyway. Never forget Israel's role in propping up Hamas and how it backfired.

Old dog, old tricks

The strategy is simple and seems to have worked, for a while at least, in Palestine and other religiously and culturally diverse Arab states such as Lebanon and Iraq. And where irreligious regimes and tribal cultures exist, the degree of success or near success seems to increase proportionally. This is not the first time Israel has pursued a policy of exploiting ethnicity and religion to divide-and-conquer.

The Palestinian Druze, in sharp contrast to other Shami Druze, have disavowed their Palestinian heritage and pledged allegiance to the Jewish state effectively depriving the remaining Palestinians of a desperately needed base of popular support. But Palestinians, both Christians of all sects as well as Muslims of all shades, do not have a history of deep-rooted animosity or sectarian strife. Even at the peak of Lebanon's civil and religious conflagration, Palestinians exhibited an immunity to such religious division which was always strengthened by a common cause and culture.

Most of the recent intra-Palestinian conflict transpired along political and ideological lines but not religious ones. And this,

we are aware, is much to the Israeli dismay. Better yet, even the Palestinian Islamists refuse to split the rank in spite of the PNA's constant harassment and jailing of its leaders to placate the U.S. and Israel. How long will this national unity last? So far so good and unless the PNA or the Islamists act irresponsibly, it can withstand further Israeli and American bombardment.

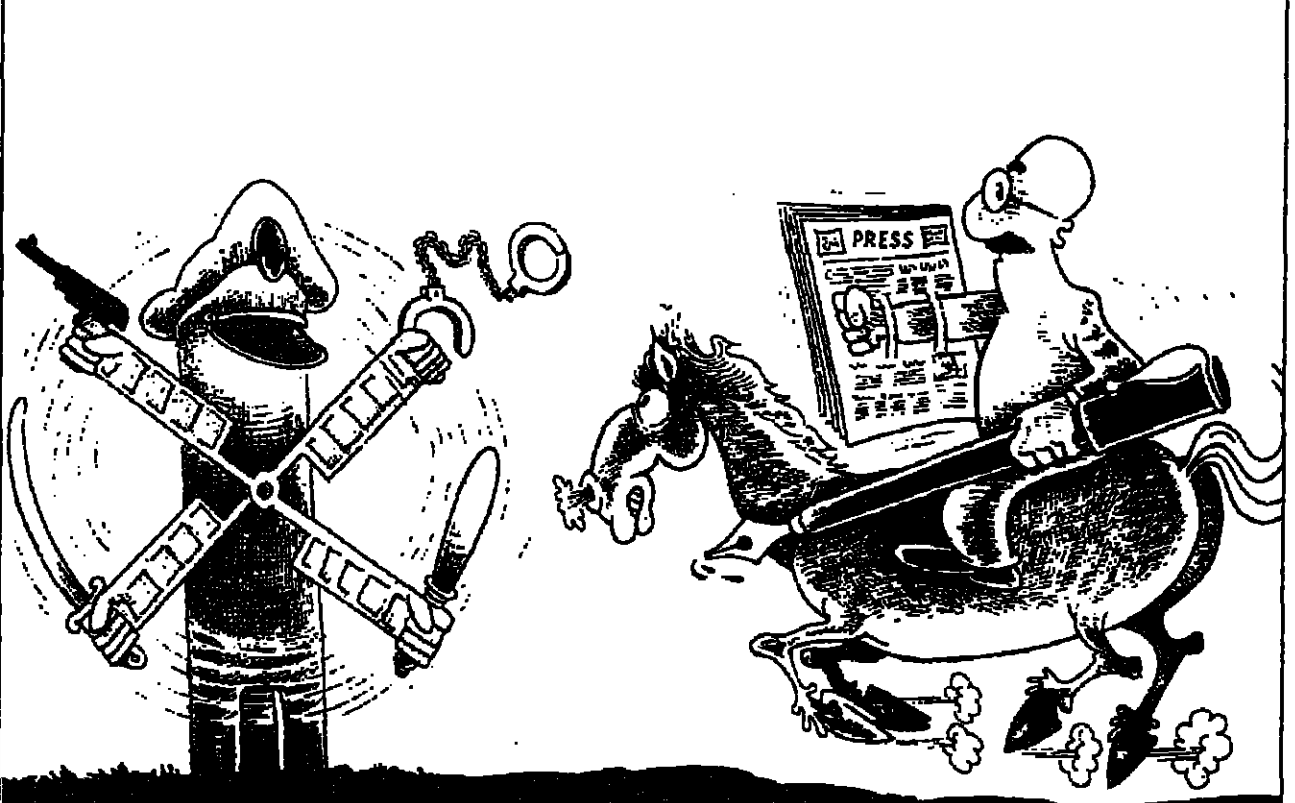
As a result of decades of Palestinian anguish, a return to faith as an escape and the rising Islamists' influence on Palestinian affairs both political and social can no longer be ignored. In many cases it may have had a positive influence on restraining Arafat's policy, or its absence, of runaway concessions to the Israelis and alleged corruption or mismanagement. But with the increasing acceptance of Islamic orthodoxy comes a burden to be paid by all Palestinians without exception and a simple test of their individual priorities: Palestinian statehood or personal convenience.

Stories of orthodox Muslim Palestinian youths tormenting pedestrians in Ramallah or Nabulus for not adhering to strict Islamic dress codes or for eating in public during the Holy Month of Ramadan are common. But if any Palestinian finds such harassment grounds for breaking ranks, their exit should be welcomed. It is quality of cadres we should seek not quantity.

The onus in the end is on the Palestinian mainstream and leadership to feverishly strive to deconstruct any artificial walls the Israelis are working frantically to erect in our midst. We must ensure no credulous Palestinian unwittingly works to cement these artificial barriers by reminding ourselves of who are the ultimate beneficiaries. The Israelis again.

The writer is freelance Arab American journalist and member of the Arab American Mirror think-tank established in the U.S. to help address the imbalance in Middle East coverage in the U.S. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

M. KAHIL



LETTERS

Back to the cabbies

To the editor:

AFTER READING Thursday's "Society on the move," I found "Inconsiderate thugs" to be a perfect description of Jordanian taxi drivers.

Brian Cope in his letter "Two problems" (Jordan Times, May 10) seems to find taxi drivers "courteous, kind and generous." I wish that were true. If Jordanian taxi drivers were such gentlemen, obviously most teenage girls would never even thought about going into a taxi by myself.

It seems to me that Mr. Cope has not heard of the harassment of foreign women domestic help from Sri Lanka and the Philippines who too often encounter taxi drivers who do not stop the car when reaching their destination, and worse. As a female, the only country I have been to and felt comfortable taking a taxi was the U.K. Taxi drivers there are mostly friendly and pleasant (to a certain limit) and are real gentlemen.

Maybe not all our taxi drivers are thugs, but they surely are not saints!

Jomana Waal Karadseh
Amman

Feature

Palestinian international

By Pascal R. Karmy

ON APRIL 22, 1998, at the Arab League summit in Cairo, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) signed the Convention Against Terrorism. In this move, there are two important dimensions to the convention. The first is the convention and the armed struggle of the Palestinian people. The second is the PNA's commitment to the international community. The PNA's commitment to the international community is a sign of its maturity and its readiness to accept the responsibilities of a sovereign state. The PNA's commitment to the international community is a sign of its maturity and its readiness to accept the responsibilities of a sovereign state.

The PNA's commitment to the international community is a sign of its maturity and its readiness to accept the responsibilities of a sovereign state. The PNA's commitment to the international community is a sign of its maturity and its readiness to accept the responsibilities of a sovereign state. The PNA's commitment to the international community is a sign of its maturity and its readiness to accept the responsibilities of a sovereign state. The PNA's commitment to the international community is a sign of its maturity and its readiness to accept the responsibilities of a sovereign state.

The PNA's commitment to the international community is a sign of its maturity and its readiness to accept the responsibilities of a sovereign state. The PNA's commitment to the international community is a sign of its maturity and its readiness to accept the responsibilities of a sovereign state. The PNA's commitment to the international community is a sign of its maturity and its readiness to accept the responsibilities of a sovereign state. The PNA's commitment to the international community is a sign of its maturity and its readiness to accept the responsibilities of a sovereign state.

Two-day weekend

Zachary M. Vassan

TURNING HOME after a

productive week at

work, I found myself

in a bit of a predicament.

While the Kingdom

has been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

of work, it has also

been blessed with

48 hours a week

G15 summit opens in Cairo

100

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Insurance companies will not be given more time to increase capital to JD2m

**** THERE IS NO intention to extend the grace period given to insurance companies to adjust to the requirement of raising their capital to JD2 million, the insurance commissioner at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply has stressed.**

Comptroller Basil Hindawi said the grace period was over and it will not be renewed, especially as most of the companies have met the requirement before the end of the deadline. Noting that only three companies did not complete the measures to raise their capital, Mr. Hindawi urged them to fully expedite the work and consequently avoid being subjected to legal penalties.

"The policy of the ministry is fixed in this regard and will not be altered because it is an implementation of the law that is indisputable and binding to all," the comptroller emphasised. He highlighted the importance of mergers as an alternative to meet the requirement and strengthen the financial standing.

Dr. Hindawi said that the newly-established companies, which were set up after 1996, have to raise their capital to JD2 million within two years from being officially licensed to operate. There are three companies in this category that have to increase their capital, the comptroller added.

Asked about the draft of the new insurance law, Dr. Hindawi said it was formulated according to the best international standards. "It was prepared after a thorough study, with the participation of all concerned parties, to be a modern law in all standards and to be in tandem with the requirement of the insurance market," he concluded noting that the new draft law was completed and presented to the Council of Ministers. (Al Ra'i).

Maritime company posts \$3.5m profit

**** THE ARAB Maritime Bridge Company posted \$3.5 million in profit last year, the firm's general manager Abdul Razzaq Abdul Wahhab has said.** He revealed that since 1988 until the end of last year, the company transported around 10 million passengers and half a million small and large vehicles. During the past ten years the company's profit amounted to about JD3 million or nine-fold the firm's capital.

The company was set up in 1985 as a joint Jordanian-Egyptian-Iraqi company, mainly to transport passengers and goods between Amman and Neweiba, the Egyptian port. The capital of the company amounts to \$6 million paid equally by the three countries.

Mr. Abdul Wahhab said the company's fleet comprises two ferries each with the capacity to transport 2,750 passengers, 250 small cars and 37 trucks. The fleet also includes a 260-passenger speed boat (Al Ra'i).

Foreign firms may be allowed to open offices in Tehran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Foreign companies would be allowed to open offices in Tehran for the first time since the 1979 Islamic Revolution under a new policy proposed by the economic ministry, an official said Monday.

Reza Zavarei, the director of the state registrar office, told the English-language daily Tehran Times that the ministry had approved a "set of regulations to guide foreign companies intending to open an office in Tehran."

The regulations, still to be approved by the cabinet, "will solve many problems facing Iran, notably after the break up of the former Soviet Union and Eastern (European Communist) Bloc," he said, without elaborating.

"Foreign firms will be allowed to open offices here on a reciprocal basis and within the framework of business activities defined by our government," the official said, adding that foreign companies were required to "operate within the framework of the country's Islamic tradition."

The Iranian parliament passed a law last November to allow foreign companies to register in Iran.

The law however stipulates that any such authorization would have to be "reciprocated" by allowing

Iranian firms to have representation in the country whose firms operate in Iran. It also obliges the foreign firms to confine their activities here within rules set by the assembly and in conformity with Iranian law.

Until now, foreign firms were not allowed to be legally represented and any activities required special authorization from the government.

Around 30 foreign companies are presently active in Iran under a special status.

Iran has been trying to attract foreign investment, but there has been little interest mainly due to strict laws.

Continent's first euros to be struck in France

PARIS (AFP) — The first euro coins were to roll out of France's official mint Monday, the first single currency coins to be struck by any of the 11 nations joining the currency.

Economy Minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn and European Affairs Minister Pierre Moscovici planned to attend the launch of the one euro coins in the southwest town of Pessac, near Bordeaux.

The first coins will be a limited series, with mass-production due later. The mint has already begun striking the lower denomination cent coins.

By January 2002, when euro notes and coins are to begin to replace national currencies, France is scheduled to strike 7.6 billion coins, or 30,000 tonnes worth, four times the

weight of the Eiffel Tower. That will mean 12 million coins a day during three years for the Pessac mint.

The eight different coins, worth between 0.01 and two euros, will be struck with one European side and one national side.

In France, coins worth 1, 2 and 5 cents will carry the portrait of Marianne, the female symbol of the French republic, while 10s, 20s and 50s will feature a tower, a flower and a leaf.

Belgium, Spain and Italy are due to begin producing their euros in the summer while Austria has decided to begin in autumn and Germany by end-year.

Saudi Arabia believes oil market on the mend

DAMASCUS (R) — Saudi Arabia believes oil markets are on the mend with supply and demand back in balance after oil producers started reducing supplies, a Gulf source said Monday.

The source, familiar with Saudi oil policy, said OPEC's biggest producer was "optimistic" that crude prices would continue their recovery from the nine-year lows of early March.

"We are 100 per cent sure prices will not fall," the source told reporters on the sidelines of an Arab energy conference.

He said it could take another four to six weeks to see the full impact on the market of the cuts agreed by OPEC and non-OPEC after a secret meeting held in Riyadh by Saudi Arabia.

"The market is getting tighter. Prices will improve in coming weeks and months," he said, calling the market "well balanced."

But he said all producers, including Saudi, remained open to the possibility of a second round of production cuts if necessary.

Producers were discussing ways to improve the market "including the possibility of further production cuts if required," he said.

Mexico, one of the Riyadh trio of producers which orchestrated the cuts, said last week that the outlook for the market indicated more cuts would probably not be needed.

Major oil producers have pledged reductions of about 1.5 million barrels a day (bpd) to year-end including 1.25 million from Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) members.

The source said Saudi Arabia was satisfied that producers were sticking by those pledges.

"We are sure that most countries are committed to pledges — OPEC and non-OPEC," he said.

Estimates were that OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers removed at least 1.3 million barrels a day (bpd) from the market in April compared to the February benchmark for cuts, the Gulf source said.

The estimates came from a number of secondary sources which monitor the market.

Oil markets had found further support from a fall in Russian exports and were likely to draw strength from North Sea maintenance and some improvement in Asian demand, the Gulf source added.

The oil market situation would be discussed further at a scheduled meeting of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) oil ministers on June 16 in Riyadh.

OPEC members Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar and non-OPEC Oman are GCC members along with Bahrain.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

those pledges.

"We are sure that most countries are committed to pledges — OPEC and non-OPEC," he said.

Estimates were that OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers removed at least 1.3 million barrels a day (bpd) from the market in April compared to the February benchmark for cuts, the Gulf source said.

The estimates came from a number of secondary sources which monitor the market.

Oil markets had found further support from a fall in Russian exports and were likely to draw strength from North Sea maintenance and some improvement in Asian demand, the Gulf source added.

The oil market situation would be discussed further at a scheduled meeting of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) oil ministers on June 16 in Riyadh.

OPEC members Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar and non-OPEC Oman are GCC members along with Bahrain.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

OPEC meets in Vienna on June 24.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7785	0.8141	1.4842	132.63	1.4334	1761.90	2.0078	6.9570
DE Mark	0.5629	-	0.3454	0.5352	74.65	0.8067	986.65	1.2555	3.3532
GB Sterling	1.6285	2.8945	-	2.4169	216.24	2.3343	2852.97	3.2599	9.7010
CH Franc	0.6738	1.1955	0.4132	-	89.37	0.9583	1179.55	134.79	4.0112
JP Yen	0.0075	1.3388	0.4625	1.1184	-	1.0803	13.20	160.84	4.4894
CA Dollar	0.6976	1.2916	0.4225	1.0566	1.08	-	1270.80	1.4351	4.3255
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0137	0.3502	0.0847	1322.40	0.8180	-	11.42	3.3988
NL Guilder	0.4996	0.8874	0.3065	0.7414	66.22	0.7158	874.85	-	2.9744
FR Franc	0.1679	0.2981	0.1030	0.2408	22.24	0.2408	33.59	33.5900	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7505	0.3770	3.5400	0.3015	3.6727	1614.00	3.4025
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2898	0.5317	5.1340	0.4252	5.1801	2135.40	4.7990
Saudi Riyal	0.2686	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0804	0.98	403.68	0.9072
Bahraini Dinar	2.85	1.8808	9.8491	-	8.66	0.7988	9.74	4016.33	9.0259
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1848	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0828	1.01	415.93	0.9348
Kuwait Dinar	3.3167	2.3816	12.4395	1.2603	12.07	-	12.18	5021.56	0.9348
Emirati Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0206	0.9911	0.0821	-	412.23	0.9264
Lebanese L1000	0.66	0.4683	2.4772	0.2480	2.4042	0.1991	2.4258	-	2.2744
Egyptian	0.2939	0.2084	1.1023	0.1108	1.0898	0.0888	1.0794	444.97	-

Energy									
Oil	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit
Brent	14.39	13.79							
WTI	14.39	13.79							
Bonny	14.39	13.79							
Dubai	12.92	12.93							
UL Gas	157.00	156.00							

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Buy	Sell							
US Dollar	0.708	0.710							
GB Sterling	1.1887	1.1846							
DE Mark	0.4004	0.4024							
CH Franc	0.479	0.4814							
FR Franc	0.1194	0.12							
JP Yen	0.5322	0.5348							
NL Guilder	0.3563	0.3571							
IT Lira	0.4059	0.4079							

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls		
New York	DOW JONES	9154.79	99.84	1.1	9189.87	9055.14	9055.15		
New York	S&P 500	1115.74	7.6	0.69	1119.13	1108.14	1108.14		
London	FT-SE 100	6022.6	52.8	0.88	6030.9	5957.4	5958.8		
Tokyo	Nikkei 225	15381.9	232.9	1.54	15433.9	15213.3	15148		
Paris	CAC 40	4017.24	110.88	2.84	4017.24	3966.84	3966.84		
Frankfurt	DAX	5341.89	84.11	1.6	5347.8	5305.55	5287.68		

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET										
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHEIKHAN										
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 11/05/1998										
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P/E	DEV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
\$ 355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	15.5	1.05	94	2750	523995	186.00	190.00	4.00+
1.300	1.620	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.6	4.19	22	44660	74074	1.65	1.67	0.02+
1.300	0.880	HID. EAST INV. BK.	64.4	0.00	25	36450	29809	0.93	0.98	0.05+
6.160	4.660	THE HOUSING BK.	18.6	3.41	54	17643	102593	5.76	5.87	0.11+
\$ 4.180	1.790	JOR. KONTAT BANK	9	0.00	2	200	381	1.88	1.91	0.03+
920	590	JOR. GULF BANK	3.9	10.61	12	17600	11616	0.66	0.66	-
\$ 4.020	1.740	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	19.0	0.00	26	5100	9445	1.87	1.86	-0.01-
\$ 3.900	1.500	JOR. INV. F.M. BANK	9.8	0.00	7	1900	2875	1.53	1.53	-
\$ 2.350	1.610	JOR. INV. F.M. BANK/NEW	8	0.00	1	100	155	1.63	1.55	-0.08-
1.400	0.900	BEIT AL-HAL (BEITNA)	4.2	0.00	4	5450	4740	0.83	0.87	0.04+
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 260.05 CHNG: +1.90 237 125875 759710										
\$ 1.350	0.900	ARABIAN SEAS INSUR.	49.4	0.00	3	163	167	0.95	0.90	-0.05-
\$ 2.300	1.200	HOLY LAND INSUR.	5.9	0.00	2	100	114	1.20	1.14	-0.06-
2.350	1.800	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	8.8	0.00	1	250	550	2.10	2.20	0.10+
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 121.53 CHNG: +0.08 5 513 811										
2.240	1.620	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.8	5.47	10	5050	10169	2.02	2.01	-0.01-
\$ 5.500	2.450	HIDEX MINERALS	73.8	0.00	1	50	225	4.59	4.50	-0.09-
1.550	0.970	NATL. PORTFOLIO	43.5	0.00	14	4700	5128	1.08	1.09	0.01+
1.120	0.500	REAL ESTATE	17.6	0.00	2	1100	970	0.90	0.90	-
1.480	1.060	MED. EAST HOTELS	9	0.00	2	100	110	1.06	1.10	0.04+
4.600	2.890	ARAB INTL. INV. EXCH.	10.0	2.00	4	1700	6822	4.04	4.01	-0.03-
1.930	1.490	UNIPED CO.	6.7	7.28	3	600	906	1.52	1.51	-0.01-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 114.44 CHNG: -0.14 35 13300 24330										
4.450	2.450	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	15.3	4.26	45	37252	94921	2.53	2.58	0.05+
7.050	5.500	ARAB PETROL CO.	27.1	3.64	1	1000	5500	5.50	5.50	-
11.250	9.270	JOR. PETROL REFINERY	10.0	8.60	10	3492	35939	10.25	10.33	0.08+
6.100	4.500	JORDAN FARMING	10.7	5.0	7	50	263	5.50	5.22	-0.28-
2.070	1.100	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AGR.	9	0.00	2	450	527	1.20	1.17	-0.03-
\$ 5.740	3.540	ARAB PHARM. MFG.	14.4	3.84	89	38213	199823	5.20	5.21	0.01+
\$ 7.300	1.760	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.1	4.41	2	3700	6570	1.76	1.85	0.09+
\$ 4.750	1.570	JOR. PRINT. PRCS.	8.1	8.47	2	175	644	3.87	3.68	-0.19-
1.440	1.020	JOR. PIPES MFGCT.	9.8	8.47	1	5000	1770	1.18	1.18	-
\$ 1.420	0.750	NATPA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	2	650	528	0.85	0.81	-0.04-
0.770	0.400	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	15.9	0.00	120	2300	3458	0.48	0.47	0.01-
0.620	0.510	RATIONAL INDS.	9	0.00	10	18350	9542	1.52	1.52	-
0.760	0.370	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	2	4000	1600	0.41	0.40	-0.01-
\$ 2.210	1.300	UNIV. CHEM. INDS.	12.9	6.35	1	800	894	1.30	1.26	-0.04-
\$ 3.000	1.920	NAC. CABLE MFG. COFAC	27.7	0.00	6	1421	1477	1.16	1.17	0.01+
0.730	0.530	JOR. SULPHO-BANK	14.4	0.00	2	250	150	0.61	0.60	-0.01-
1.860	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	11.3	4.62	6	4950	6175	1.30	1.30	-
1.810	1.370	INTV. MFG. INDVST.	9.0	0.00	10	9840	9840	0.87	0.86	-0.01-
1.200	0.670	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	9.1	24.71	3	2856	1938	0.67	0.68	0.02+
1.620	1.320	NATL. CHLORINE	9.2	7.58	3	966	1274	1.32	1.32	-
0.610	0.480	JOR. NEW CHEM. CO.	11.3	0.00	1	1000	1000	0.48	0.49	0.01+
1.310	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	7.4	5.56	7	2651	3339	1.27	1.26	-0.01-
1.220	0.870	UNION CH. & YEO.	12.0	0.00	2	8700	8800	1.10	1.10	-
0.660	0.400	JORDAN STEEL	9.3	9.44	8	134	6487	0.74	0.74	-
0.690	0.570	MID-EAST COMPLEX	10.7	0.00	20	19320	11387	0.59	0.59	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 104.02 CHNG: +0.37 232 167904 405421										
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 174.87 CHNG: +1.30 529 307592 2190272										
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 11/05/1998										
\$ 1.080	0.910	EXPORT & FIN. BANK 75%	16.8	0.00	4	4300	2772	0.91	0.91	-
0.530	0.400	JOR. TRADE FAC.	9	0.00	13	22750	9720	0.42	0.43	0.01+
0.700	0.480	NATL. CONSER. CENTERS	E	0.00	2	248	124	0.52	0.50	-0.02-
0.800	0.650	UNION INV. 50%	9	0.00	3	16000	4160	0.76	0.76	-
0.360	0.260	ARAB FIN. INDVST.	0.00	0.00	12	10000	1532	0.26	0.26	-
1.010	0.720	AL-SHARH INV. CO.	P	0.00	10	100000	100000	1.00	1.00	-
0.780	0.610	AL-DAMLIYAH	39.8	0.00	6	30000	19814	0.70	0.68	-0.02-
0.370	0.280	ARAB FOOD & MED.	6	0.00	10	10000	10000	0.28	0.28	-
0.500	0.280	NATL. TEXTILE	P	0.00	2	900	288	0.32	0.32	-
0.360	0.260	NATL. HOLY. RES. HAYICO	9	0.00	111	353823	151759	0.44	0.44	-
0.580	0.400	INDUS. CERAM	6	0.00	6	6000	2840	0.40	0.40	-
1.650	0.860	UNION TOBACCO 87.5%	9.7	8.22	1	1200	1400	1.53	1.52	-0.01-
0.730	0.550	KALF PHARM.	E	0.00	2	1000	870	0.68	0.67	0.01-
0.470	0.300	INDUS. CERAM	13.1	0.00	2	1000	125	0.30	0.30	-
0.590	0.550	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	9	0.00	9	8298	8298	0.63	0.62	-0.01-
0.710	0.430	NATL. POULTRY	45	0.00	45	202456	104176	0.52	0.52	-
\$ 0.950	0.750	STOCKS & BOND	E	0.00	6	2294	62	0.75	0.75	-
\$ 1.310	1.000	NUTRIDRAM	P	0.00	10	100000	100000	1.00	1.00	-
GRAND TOTAL 245 916060 539443										
+ : Stock 12 months low \$: New listing during the past 12 months * : Listed during the past 12 months P : P/E ratio is 100 or more - : Negative P/E E : Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year										

FIFA challengers clash in Asia

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — The battle for the most powerful job in world football moves east this week with Lennart Johansson and Joseph Blatter scrapping for key Asian votes for their June 8 showdown.

Johansson, president of the European Football Union, UEFA, and Blatter, general secretary of the world body FIFA for 12 years, make a bid for the 39 Asian votes up for stake when they address the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) congress.

Asia's votes in the battle between the burly Swede and the dapper Swiss to succeed Joao Havelange as FIFA president are expected to be crucial in deciding the outcome two days before the opening match of the sport's summit in France.

Johansson believes he has the backing of Europe and Africa, although Blatter fired a shot across his bows by opening his election campaign at the French Olympic headquarters in Paris. Latin America and Asia are leaning to the former Swiss colonel, whose rapport with the 198 national football associations on five continents gives him grassroots appeal.

Johansson has built his campaign on an appeal to the top officials in continental federations, promising them a bigger voice in FIFA and more money for the development of the game.

But the Swede was disappointed by the apparent indifference reaction he got when he last visited Asia in April, when AFC General Secretary Peter

Velappan got Johansson to speak to AFC executive committee members at a ceremony for AFC's new building in Kuala Lumpur.

At the same time Blatter proved he could play politics better by reaffirming his ties in private meetings with individual secretaries of Asian federations.

In contrast to the FIFA battle, bloc interest more than personal rapport appears likely to determine the elections to the AFC executive committee and to the federation's two executive committee slots in FIFA.

Incumbent President Sultan Ahmad Shah of Malaysia was unopposed as president when nominations closed in mid-March. At Thursday's elections, the vital contests are for 10 executive committee seats and two seats at FIFA.

AFC has 45 members but only 39 are eligible to vote in the continental congress and at FIFA. Palestine, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, North Korea and Mongolia are ineligible because they did not field teams in a required minimum of two AFC competitions in the preceding term.

At present there is a preponderance of members from West Asia in AFC's executive committee.

Among the AFC's 20 members, eight are from the region and the important committees of competitions, finance, referees and discipline are chaired by West Asians. Further, two of three executive seats at AFC are in the hands of Abdullah Al Dabal

(Saudi Arabia) and Mohammed Hammam (Qatar).

In Thursday's elections, Dabal, incumbent Warawi Makudi of Thailand and Junji Ogura of Japan are in a three-way contest for the two FIFA seats (Hammam's comes up for election in 2000).

AFC has five blocks — West Asia (14 affiliates, 12 votes), South Asia (seven affiliates, six votes), Central Asia (five affiliates, all eligible), Southeast Asia (10 affiliates, nine votes) and East Asia (nine affiliates, eight votes).

Japan, by dint of being joint host for the 2002 World Cup, feel they should win one of the two FIFA seats because West Asia already has Hammam at FIFA. Southeast Asia wants Warawi retained.

All this, of course, does not reckon with the considerable pull Saudi Arabia exerts over the West Asian bloc, a clout that will be mustered towards returning Dabal and the countries of Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon and United Arab Emirates, the present incumbents, to the AFC exco (10 seats for countries).

But if Central and South Asia support a move by the East and Southeast Asian blocs to reduce West Asian representation then the beneficiaries would be Ogura and Warawi.

In that event, representation at the vital committees of the AFC would be more evenly balanced in a complex game of blocs.

Injuries nag Dodgers' Asian pitchers

MIAMI (AFP) — Japan's Hideo Nomo and South Korea's Park Chan Ho are in questionable health for the Los Angeles Dodgers, whose Asian starting pitchers are searching for answers to injuries.

The Dodgers (18-18) won 4-2 over Florida here Sunday to complete an 11-game road trip that included Nomo removing himself from a game Saturday with pain in the middle finger of his right hand.

Nomo has an acrylic nail on the middle finger of his right hand to protect the fingernail, which split during his rookie season in 1995. The nail was loose and causing pain when he threw.

"It hurt too much, I couldn't pitch with it," Nomo said. "The nail didn't split, but underneath the nail my finger hurt a lot, that's why I came out."

Nomo gave up five hits, four runs and threw 72 pitches in only two innings. Manager Bill Russell and trainer Charlie Strasser said the acrylic nail would have to be removed before they could determine the cause of the pain.

When Nomo split his fingernail during his rookie season, he did not miss a start. But no one knew the extent of the injury or if he would miss any time, only that Nomo and Park were questionable.

Park had to come out of his start against the Marlins on Friday after four innings when he felt recurring pain in his lower back.

Jordan's Alkhas named to Asian All-Star team

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Whoever said that Jordanian "men cannot jump" must have been wrong. Dead wrong.

For the 2-metre 6cm (6.9 feet) Zeid Alkhas it all started with an interest in soccer which developed into basketball fever.

The Al Ahli Basketball Club player and star centre of the Jordanian national basketball team will be representing Jordan as part of the Asian All-Star team against Taipei May 25-June 1.

Alkhas was chosen to represent the Kingdom in the All-Star Team for the second time after his impressive achievement in the first match last year.

He said the experience of playing side by side with the best players in Asia as "incredible."

"I am proud to represent Jordan and be part of the Asian All-Star team," Alkhas said. "There is a big difference between training in the U.S. and here. Teams there have everything. We have financial support, gyms and five coaches," he added.

"Players there breathe basketball and the game becomes a way of living," he pointed out. "The coach plays an important part in the life of a team."

"Having an experienced coach is essential to build a well-prepared team," he said. "Choosing a coach who can communicate with



Zeid Alkhas

the players is also the key to understanding the needs of each player," he continued.

Last but not least is the dedication of the players. "More dedication, more love to your team and country is what's needed," he added.

Alkhas said the lack of suitable basketball courts is the main problem in Jordan.

He said Jordan's national team is heading in the right direction.

"With players like Ayman Du'ais, Fadi Saqqa and Ma'an Odeh, our team can make a difference," he said.

With high hopes for a promising future, Alkhas had one message for all the players in Kingdom. "Work hard and keep hoping for the best."

Passarella has Pele's vote

PARIS (AFP) — His pedigree is not in question and Argentina fans will forever have a place in their hearts for coach Daniel Passarella, who held the trophy aloft as skipper following the South American's first World Cup triumph in 1978.

But not everybody is a supporter and Federation president Julio Grondona was openly critical after a friendly defeat by Israel in April threatened to sink preparations for World Cup group clashes against Japan, Jamaica and Croatia.

However, a 1-0 victory over Brazil in Rio last month gave Passarella a much needed boost.

Despite leading Argentina comfortably enough through the qualifiers — they topped their regional group losing just two of sixteen matches —

Passarella has continually been hampered by bad relations between him and goalscoring hero Gabriel Batistuta.

Passarella has an autocratic streak and insists that unless the side's all-time leading scorer agreed to play the way Passarella wanted he risked missing the finals.

Although Batistuta returned — and scored — in a recent friendly win over Bulgaria, Passarella has often preferred to plump for Parnia's Hernan Crespo, who played for Passarella at River Plate.

"I like one of my forwards to play on the outside and one to play down the middle. Crespo is more willing to play to this style," sniffed Passarella, who has also shown the door to Real Madrid's Fernando Redondo for refusing to get his hair cut.



Passarella, who turns 45 on May 25 and who scored 24 goals in his 71 international appearances despite playing sweeper, has to deliver the goods amid reports that Argentina's 1986 winning coach Carlos Bilardo is mulling over a return to the helm.

Born in the city of Chacabuco in Buenos

Aires province Passarella, who made his name with River Plate as a sweeper before moving to Italy, has already conceded he is about ready to step aside after four years in charge. "I think I'm about 99 per cent sure I'd like to move on after the cup — probably to Europe," he says.

Title euphoria for Juve, Lens — gloom for Real

PARIS (AFP) — Juventus fans had, of course, seen it all before, but they greeted the Turin Giants' 25th Serie A title as enthusiastically as ever after the "Zebbras" put the issue beyond doubt on Sunday courtesy of a Filippo Inzaghi hat trick against Bologna.

But "Super Pippo" had to share centre stage this weekend with one of European soccer's unsung journeymen in the shape of Yohan Lachor, who secured Lens' first ever title in France after scoring the championship-winning goal at Auxerre on Saturday.

You won't find two clubs in the whole of Europe with more contrasting histories, with super-rich Juve numbered among the game's princes and little Lens very much on the side of the paupers, given their blue-collar origins.

Yet the French outfit has earned the right to rub shoulders with the big guns after overhauling similarly modest Metz by the slenderest of margins — just five goals — following Saturday's 1-1 draw.

As Juventus contemplated yet another European Cup final on May 20 and "business as usual" in the form of yet another Champions League campaign, wide-eyed Lens fans were singing deliriously into the night as the measure of their side's achievement sank in.

And, typically, their down-to-earth heroes toasted their success not with champagne but cans of lager.

Virtually the only thing the two championship-winners have in common is that they are both northern industrial towns, although Lens boasts a population of barely 35,000. And yet 30,000 came to celebrate at their Felix Bollaert stadium until the small hours.

The French side's title win was achieved without the resources available to the likes of Marseille and Paris St. Germain as Daniel Leclercq's side relied instead on old-fashioned hard graft, plus the inspiration provided by two Eastern European imports: Czech star Vladimir Smicer and Yugoslav striker Anton Drobnyak.

Half of the winning squad came

through the club's youth scheme, whereas Juve have the pick of any player in the world.

Lens' only previous success of any kind came when they were winners of the unofficial wartime league in 1944, and after a 92-year wait the extent of the celebrations were understandable.

Lens' coach Daniel Leclercq said: "This title is the reward for attacking football." His side ended the season equal top scorers with Auxerre with 55 goals in 34 games.

"Today we are dreaming of Barcelona, Juventus and Arsenal," added Leclercq. Club president Gervais Martel said: "This is the culmination of 10 years hard work."

Martel said the club's passionate fans, many decked head-to-toe in the team's red and gold colours, had played a key role in the team's success.

Italian passions were for once barely able to top those in France, but success at Juve is so routine their fans have perhaps become almost blasé.

Rivals Inter Milan gave the Old Lady a hand by throwing away any chance they might have had of lifting the "Scudetto" as they conceded two goals in the last five minutes to go down 2-1 to Bari.

And Inzaghi's explosive form did the rest as Juventus picked up their third league title in the past four seasons.

Juventus must now be confident of putting the European Cup back in their trophy cabinet for the third time as they face a Real Madrid side in growing disarray in the May 20 final in Amsterdam.

Last season's Spanish champions have inexplicably lost form and slumped to defeat at Espanyol on Saturday, meaning they could miss out on next season's Champions League.

Other results meant Real dropped down to fourth place with just one game left.

Real went down to Roberto's only goal midway through the second half and then had to watch as Athletic Bilbao

put themselves two points clear of Real, albeit with a disappointing goalless draw at Merida.

Barcelona's 5-2 thrashing at Atletico Madrid on Sunday evening was scant consolation for Real fans as their rivals have long wrapped up the title.

Real Sociedad moved above Real despite dropping careless points as they could only draw 1-1 at home to Tenerife, for whom former Middlesbrough man Emerson was on target. But Sociedad still went third ahead on goal difference.

In fact Real, without an away win in the league for almost six months, could have dropped to fifth had Mallorca won at Salamanca, but that game ended in another draw as the top five failed to muster a win between them.

Club president Lorenzo Sanz said he was flabbergasted by the team's latest setback.

"I have spoken to them all, coach Jupp Heynckes and the players. But it just hasn't made any difference," he wailed.

Heynckes faces a meeting with club officials in midweek to decide his future — which appears to lie away from the Bernabeu.

In the German Bundesliga, Karlsruhe and Cologne, for the first time, dropped out of the top flight as Borussia Muenchengladbach and Bochum pulled themselves out of the fire with victories.

Police arrested around 265 Cologne fans after they went on the rampage following their side's demotion. It was a far cry from the club's glorious past, which includes three championships.

Tailenders Arminia Bielefeld are the third team to slide into the second division.

Champions Kaiserslautern ended the season with a 1-1 draw in Hamburg while second-placed Bayern Munich crushed Borussia Dortmund 4-0 in a match of little significance. Dortmund, European champions a year ago, will not play in Europe next year.

Vogts picks Matthaus for France '98

FRANKFURT (AFP) — Germany coach Bert Vogts has included former captain Lothar Matthaus in his squad for the 1998 World Cup finals.

Matthaus, Germany's most capped player (122 internationals), last competed for Germany against Albania on December 18, 1994.

The 37-year-old's international career appeared over but the long-term absence of Matthaus Sammer left the libero position wide open.

He was booted out of the Germany team acrimoniously two years ago, just before the European championships in England.

Matthaus verbally attacked Vogts and savaged former Bayern Munich teammate Jurgen Klinsmann for allegedly spreading poisonous rumours and actively lobbying to have him removed from the national squad.

It came down to a Klinsmann versus Matthaus power struggle with neither emerging a clear winner. Matthaus did not for Germany again after the long running dispute and Klinsmann succeeded him as captain.



Bayern Munich libero Lothar Matthaus gestures during a German league match against Bayer Leverkusen in this September 1996 file photo. German soccer team coach Bert Vogts announced he had recalled veteran Matthaus for the World Cup finals in France. Matthaus, who captained Germany to victory in the 1990 World Cup, earned the last of his record 122 caps in December 1994 (Reuters photo)

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA '2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 2	GALLERIA 1	Hisham Yanes Theatre
	Bruce Willis & Gary Oldman ... in	ED	The biggest cinema production	CONCORD '1' Farouq Fishawi & Wafa Amr ... in HANHEB WANNAB (ARABIC)	ABDOUN John Travolta ... in SHE IS SO LOVELY & still showing evenings	ABDOUN Al Pacino ... in DONIE BRASCO & still showing evenings	STARTING APRIL 6TH We're Jordanian Starring Hisham Yanes, Amal Dabbas, Rania Kurdi and the group at 8:30 p.m. For reservations call: 6440155, 4625155
	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:00, 3:30, 7:00, 10:30 p.m.	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	

Hingis wins

ROME (AFP) — Martina Hingis earned revenge for a defeat in the quarterfinals of the Italian Open when she beat Venus Williams 6-3, 6-2 on Sunday to win the \$50 Italian Open in her final match of the year.

In late March at Key Biscayne, Florida — the last time the two met — Hingis beat Williams in the quarterfinals of the Miami Open. Williams, a former Wimbledon champion, also beat Hingis in the quarterfinals of the Italian Open on Sunday. Those defeats were the only ones Hingis suffered in 1997.

Hingis won the first set but Williams served twice in the second set. Williams served a double fault in the third set to give Hingis a 2-1 lead. Williams then broke Williams' serve in the fourth set to win the match.

The match lasted nearly two hours. Hingis won the fourth set 6-3. Williams won the fifth set 6-2. Hingis won the match 6-3, 6-2, 6-3.

Hingis, 20, is a former Wimbledon champion. She won the Wimbledon girls' title in 1993. She won the Wimbledon women's title in 1997. She won the Wimbledon mixed doubles title in 1997.

Williams, 23, is a former Wimbledon champion. She won the Wimbledon women's title in 1997. She won the Wimbledon mixed doubles title in 1997.

The match was part of the Italian Open. The Italian Open is a tennis tournament. It is part of the ATP Tour. It is held in Rome, Italy. It is held in the month of May. It is held on clay courts.

Spain's team performs an over-the-top act in that category at the world championships Spain won the gold medal in 1985. Team members: Paula Olive, Beatriz Noya, and Juan Renteria.

Costa wins as

Costa won his first title since claiming the title last year when he beat Alex Corretja 6-3, 6-2 in the third set of the German Open final on Sunday.

Costa, who had lost to Corretja in the first set, was leading 2-1 in the third set. Corretja was leading 2-1 in the third set. Costa won the third set 6-3. Costa won the match 6-3, 6-2, 6-3.

Costa, 28, is a former Wimbledon champion. He won the Wimbledon mixed doubles title in 1997. He won the Wimbledon mixed doubles title in 1997.

Corretja, 28, is a former Wimbledon champion. He won the Wimbledon mixed doubles title in 1997. He won the Wimbledon mixed doubles title in 1997.

The match was part of the German Open. The German Open is a tennis tournament. It is part of the ATP Tour. It is held in Berlin, Germany. It is held in the month of May. It is held on clay courts.

Costa won his first title since claiming the title last year when he beat Alex Corretja 6-3, 6-2 in the third set of the German Open final on Sunday.

Costa, who had lost to Corretja in the first set, was leading 2-1 in the third set. Corretja was leading 2-1 in the third set. Costa won the third set 6-3. Costa won the match 6-3, 6-2, 6-3.

Costa, 28, is a former Wimbledon champion. He won the Wimbledon mixed doubles title in 1997. He won the Wimbledon mixed doubles title in 1997.

Corretja, 28, is a former Wimbledon champion. He won the Wimbledon mixed doubles title in 1997. He won the Wimbledon mixed doubles title in 1997.

The match was part of the German Open. The German Open is a tennis tournament. It is part of the ATP Tour. It is held in Berlin, Germany. It is held in the month of May. It is held on clay courts.

Hingis wins second clay title of 1998

ROME (AFP) — Martina Hingis earned revenge for a defeat six weeks ago when she beat Venus Williams 6-3, 2-6, 6-3 on Sunday to win the \$926,250 Italian Open — her fourth title of the year.

In late March at Key Biscayne, Florida — the last time the pair met — world No.1 Hingis lost to fellow 17-year-old American Williams, going out in the semi-finals on hard court. Williams also beat Hingis in their first match of the year in Sydney.

On Sunday, those defeats were forgotten as Hingis improved to 5-2 in the series.

Hingis won the first set, but dropped serve twice in the second as Williams forced a decider. The Swiss player began the third set with a break but had to fight to emerge victorious after four more breaks of serve before the end.

The match lasted nearly two hours. The trophy was the fourth for Hingis this year and her second in as many weeks on the clay.

Hingis, winner of three of last year's four Grand Slams, has now triumphed at the Australian Open, Indian Wells, Hamburg and Rome so far this year.

Williams played with her left knee taped, a problem which bothered her during a marathon semi-final win over Arantxa Sanchez Vicario on Saturday at the Foro Italico.

Hingis had to be more refreshed after spending just 46 minutes in her semi-final victory over Croatian

Mirjan Lucic.

The two young talents tested out each other's games in the first two games of the match with a pair of back-to-back breaks.

Hingis then hit a spot of poor form, losing ten points in a row as she dropped serve to love in the fifth game and fell to 0-30 in the sixth game before recovering.

She then claimed a break point and capitalised on it for 3-3 when Williams returned long.

The top seed quickly gathered her resolve, holding in the next game and taking her second break of the set against the American.

Williams put herself into a corner when a drop shot landed short and Hingis needed only one of the two break points on offer to take a 5-3 lead.

The Swiss wasted one with a return past the baseline, but took the set a point later when Williams drove a backhand out.

Williams took command in the second set, breaking in the sixth game for 4-2 and levelling the match at a set apiece when Hingis sent a forehand into the net.

Hingis then kept her nerve to win the marathon encounter.

"It was a match of strategy. I knew she was tired from Saturday," said Hingis, who won the last three games of the match. "I thought she might fall apart in the middle of the point, but she didn't, she didn't give up until the end."

Hingis, shorter by at least 20 cm to her rangy American opponent, added: "She's all legs, all arms."

"She takes one step and she's at the ball, she has gone from one corner to the other. I tried to mix it up. But sometimes it didn't work."

"She sometimes had a better answer. But the last three games were OK."

The Swiss said there is little doubt that she and Williams will challenge each other frequently in the future.

"Venus is the toughest (teenager) one of all," said Hingis. "Her consistency has gotten better."

"I've always played her in semis or finals in the last three tournaments. She'll be ready for the French Open for sure. I think she's playing like the world No. 2."

Williams, who heads home to Florida, was far from impressed with her own showing this week.

"I wasn't hitting the ball the way I wanted to," said the American. "Today I worked to stop making mistakes. They still came, but not as much as in the other matches this week."

"It was hard for me to get my footwork straight on the clay. I just don't play on it enough. Near the end of the week, I was able to do that better and better."

"The thing I'll remember being at the site all day and night and trying to get some sleep (playing both singles and doubles). Maybe next year, I won't enter the doubles after all."

Bulls, Lakers, Pacers and Jazz take control

CHARLOTTE (AFP) — Michael Jordan scored 31 points and reigning champion Chicago beat Charlotte 94-80 Sunday, moving within one victory of the National Basketball Association semi-finals.

The Bulls, seeking their third consecutive title and sixth in eight years, took a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven quarter-final and can oust the Hornets with a victory Wednesday in Chicago.

Utah, runners-up to Chicago in the finals last year, Indiana and the Los Angeles Lakers also won Sunday to take 3-1 leads in their quarter-final matchups.

Reggie Miller scored 38 points, including a dramatic three-point basket to force overtime, and Indiana beat New York 118-107. The Pacers can advance with a home victory Wednesday.

Shaquille O'Neal scored 39 points and the Los Angeles Lakers beat Seattle 112-100. The Lakers can reach the NBA semi-finals for the first time since 1991 by winning Tuesday in Seattle.

Karl Malone played through ankle and wrist injuries and collected 34 points and 12 rebounds as the Jazz beat the Spurs 82-73 for a 3-1 lead.

Jordan returned here to his home state for what might be the final time in his NBA career, having said this could be his final season. Hundreds stayed to the finish to cheer as he walked off the court.

The Hornets led 20-18 after the first quarter but the Bulls pulled ahead 44-40 at half-time and stretched the margin until putting in reserves to finish.

"It was our pressure defence and overall offense," Jordan said. "We kept putting pressure on them and they never responded."

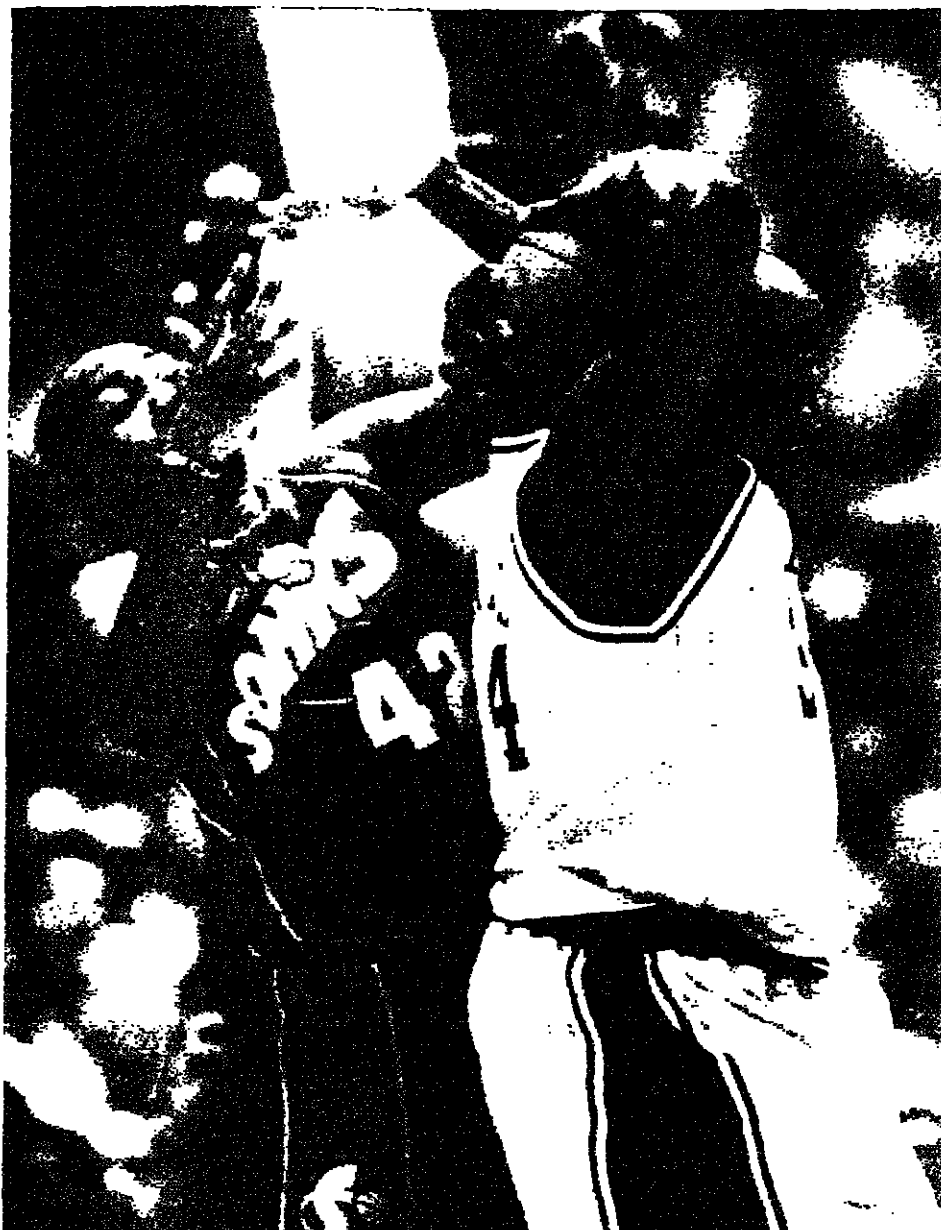
"We took their best shot early on. All we had to do is keep our poise and get ourselves back in to the game."

Chicago's Dennis Rodman, sporting black leopard spots in his colorful dyed hair, pulled down 18 rebounds and scored eight points in the rout.

"Young teams get very excited in the beginning," Rodman said. "They start thinking, 'We got 'em. We got 'em. We got 'em' and they forget to play the rest of the three quarters."

A sellout crowd at New York's Madison Square Garden was silenced when Miller extended a history of beating the Knicks, sinking the equalizer with 5.1 seconds remaining in regulation.

In the final frantic seconds, Indiana centre Rik Smits



Los Angeles Lakers Shaquille O'Neal (R) wins the rebound against Seattle SuperSonics Vin Baker in the fourth period in game four of the Western Conference semifinals. The Lakers won 112-100 to take a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven series (Reuters photo)

missed a shot and the loose ball was pulled down by Chris Mullin. He passed to Mark Jackson, who found Miller unguarded outside the three-point arc.

"It was a broken play. We were fortunate to get the ball back," Miller said. "I was surprised to be so wide open. Those are the toughest shots to hit on the road. But fortune was with me and I knocked it down."

Allan Houston, whom the Knicks chose over Miller two years ago when bidding for free agents, missed at the buzzer after Miller evened the game at 102-102.

New York did not score in the final 3 1/2 minutes of regulation and the first 3 1/2 minutes of overtime.

Jackson scored the first five points of overtime. Smits scored inside and Miller added a three-pointer with 88 seconds remaining in overtime to give the Pacers a 112-102 edge.

Eddie Jones added 32 points for the Lakers, scoring

points and 15 rebounds. Houston scored 19 points to lead New York, but had only one after half-time. Patrick Ewing had 17 points and eight rebounds.

The Knicks went on a 12-4 run to grab their largest lead, 97-89, with five minutes to play in regulation. Dureman Smits scored 14 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter. "Rik did a great job of keeping us in the game," Miller said.

At Los Angeles, O'Neal hit 15 of 20 shots, pulled down eight rebounds, passed out the seven assists and blocked five shots to dominate Seattle, whose three losses to the Lakers have come by an average of 17 points.

"If we play smart, we can play with anybody," O'Neal said. "Everybody is playing great. We have finally realized we have to play as a team if we are going to achieve our goal."

Eddie Jones added 32 points for the Lakers, scoring

a playoff career high for the third consecutive game.

In the other Western Conference game, Malone, who sprained his ankle late in Game Three, suffered a sprained wrist in Sunday's game. He still shot 17-for-28 from the field, but, amazingly, did not attempt a free throw after going to the line 825 times during the regular season.

Malone scored 10 points in the fourth quarter, sinking jumper after jumper to thwart each run San Antonio made at the lead. His last basket with 45 seconds remaining all but sealed the win, putting the Jazz ahead, 79-73.

Greg Foster added 13 points and Byron Russell had 12 for Utah, which will return home on Tuesday to try to wrap up its second straight trip to the Western Conference finals.

Tim Duncan netted 22 points and David Robinson had a quiet 15 and 11 boards for San Antonio.



The Spanish team performs an exercise with two hoops and three ribbons to win the gold medal in that category at the world team rhythmic gymnastics championships. Olympic champions Spain won the gold medal at the hoop and ribbon apparatus final with a score of 19.850. Team members are (no L-R identification available): Lorena Gurendez, Paula Orive, Beatriz Nogales, Sara Bayon, Marta Calamonte and Carolina Malchir (Reuters photo)

Ilie wins first ATP crown

CORAL SPRINGS, Florida (AFP) — Andrew Ilie won his first ATP Tour title here Sunday, beating Davide Sanguinetti 7-5, 6-4 to capture America's Red Clay Championship.

Australian qualifier Ilie took a \$34,800 top prize in the \$245,000 event with his victory over the eighth-seeded Italian.

Sanguinetti, 25, started the tournament ranked a career-best 82nd after winning a Challenger series event last month in his homeland.

Ilie, 22, has been slowed by back injuries the past two years. The world's 169th-ranked player has won seven matches in a row and reached his first ATP career quarter-final in Orlando two weeks ago.

"I took a test and my blood pressure was already down," he revealed. "I took some vitamins, but I had a lot of matches. Because of the rain I didn't start until Thursday and didn't have time to recover myself between matches."

Costa wins as Corretja quits

HAMBURG (AFP) — Albert Costa won his first tournament since claiming the Marbella title last September when fellow Spaniard Alex Corretja retired in the third set of their German Open final on Sunday.

Unseeded Costa, who earned \$361,000, led 6-2, 6-0, 1-0 against an opponent who was suffering from fatigue after his semi-final victory against Felix Mantilla on Saturday.

Looking listless right from the start, Corretja sat with an ice towel around his neck at every changeover, and called for the trainer after conceding the opening game of the third set.

Fourth-seeded Corretja, who collected \$190,000, was stretched to three sets in every round, and saved two match points in overcoming Gustavo Kuerten in a draining quarter-final.

Costa also saved match points in his first round win over defending champion Andrei Medvedev, but then won his remaining matches comfortably.

Costa won his first two service games to love and held break point in the second game when Corretja double-faulted. And although Corretja was able to immediately recover a Costa break for 3-1, he was able to offer little resistance after that.

Costa broke again to lead 4-2 and again for the set, and then dropped just one point in the first three games of the second set.

Corretja increasingly failed to run for the ball, and the only entertainment came from a few drop-shots or lobs that broke up the short rallies.

Costa was aware before

the match of Corretja's problem. "We are friends and spoke before the match and he told me he had no power," said Costa. "He played one day six sets, and then three sets in two more matches. It's too much."

"But I feel like a winner despite the way I won because on the first day I was two match points down and feeling bad with my back. That gave me confidence and I played good tennis this week."

Corretja's retirement marked the third time in three days that players failed to last the distance here. Goran Ivanisevic quit in the second set of his quarter-final against Mantilla, suffering from

low blood pressure and a respiratory infection, and Karol Kucera conceded his semi-final against Costa because of blisters.

"I played today because I have respect for Albert and I didn't want to disappoint the spectators and sponsors," said Corretja. "But I saw already in the morning that I couldn't play. When I practised I got dizzy, and after two games I saw it was impossible for me to play."

"I took a test and my blood pressure was already down," he revealed. "I took some vitamins, but I had a lot of matches. Because of the rain I didn't start until Thursday and didn't have time to recover myself between matches."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HIRSCH
©1998 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

TEST YOUR PLAY

Both vulnerable. South deals.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ 6 4 3 ♥ 10 8 5 ♦ A K 7 2 ♣ K 4</p> <p>WEST</p> <p>♠ Q 10 9 7 2 ♥ K J ♦ Q 9 8 4 ♣ Q 7</p>	<p>EAST</p> <p>♠ J 8 ♥ 9 7 4 2 ♦ 5 ♣ J 10 8 6 3</p> <p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A K 5 ♥ A Q 3 ♦ J 10 6 3 ♣ A 5 2</p>	<p>The bidding:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">SOUTH</td> <td style="width: 25%;">WEST</td> <td style="width: 25%;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 25%;">EAST</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>Opening lead: Seven of ♠</p> <p>Here's your chance to display your dummy-play technique. Cover the East-West cards with your thumbs and decide how you would play three no trump after the lead of the seven of spades. You get to three no trump after a straight power auction. All you have to do is make it after East produces the jack of spades at trick one.</p> <p style="font-size: small;">(A nod of approval is well earned!)</p>	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST							
1NT	Pass	3NT	Pass							

If you duck the first spade and win the continuation. What now? Suppose you cross to the ace of diamonds and take the heart finesse. That loses and back comes a spade, removing your last stopper in the suit as East discards a club. You can now afford the diamond finesse. West covers, but East shows out, shifting another club. It looks as if you have an end-play. Come to hand with a diamond as East party with yet another club, cash the ace and king of clubs and exit with a club. East wins and returns a heart, and you are left with a guess. Could you have done better?

The play to the first three tricks needs no improvement, but a heart to the ace at trick four offers several additional chances. No matter what West plays to this trick, run the jack of diamonds next. When East shows out, revert to hearts by leading up to queen. Since the jack fell in the first round, dummy's ten is the fulfilling trick. This line wins whenever the straight heart finesse would have, but also produces a ninth trick on two other combinations — when West starts with a doubleton jack or doubleton nine of hearts. You can then establish a heart trick in dummy by force.

WANTED

IN SAUDI ARABIA

MBA: 7-10 years experience in Business Administration and Real Estate Development.

Civil Engineer: 7-10 years experience in Construction Engineering.

Graduates from Europe or America are preferred. Interviews will be held May 20 & 21.

For appointment please call 5850383 (9 a.m. - 9 p.m.)

Amman Baccalaureate School

ABS invites applications for a Physical Education Teacher for August 1998.

The successful applicant should:

- Be a university graduate.
- Have an excellent command of both English and Arabic.
- Have relevant experience.

Being able to coach Basketball is an asset.

Application forms may be obtained from ABS Reception (Tel : 5411191) and must be completed and submitted by Saturday 16 May 1998, with a recent photo.

MÖVENPICK AWARD FOR TOP PRODUCERS 1997

The management of the Mövenpick Resort Petra is thanking its top producers for their support in 1997.

These four Jordanian travel agents:

- United Travel Agency, managed by Ms. Ghada Najjar
- International Traders, managed by Mr. Munir Nassor
- Petra Travel & Tourism Co., managed by Mr. Nasser Kassar
- Dakkak Tours & Travel, managed by Mr. Ziad & Mr. Omran Dakkak

have given great support to Mövenpick and are committed to the 5 star Mövenpick Resort in the Rose City of Petra, where great food, efficient and friendly service is the talk-of-the-town.

PETRA

P.O. Box 214 • JORDAN • MOUSA 718101 • PETRA, JORDAN • PHONE - 962 3 2157111 • FAX - 962 3 2157112
E-MAIL: petra@petra.com.jo • INTERNET: www.movenpick-hotels.com/petra.jo.htm



SHOWING THE JEWELS: Jordanian models display jewellery by Egyptian-born artist Suzanne Al Masry at an exhibition in the American Centre in Amman, Sunday. The Egyptian artist works with silver, enamels, semi-precious stones, and is one of a few artists to have work exhibited around the world in her own lifetime (Reuters photo)

Hrawi asks Pope to boycott Bethlehem millennial celebration

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanese President Elias Hrawi urged Pope John Paul II not to go to the West Bank town of Bethlehem for the millennium celebration because peace has not yet come to the Middle East, Beirut newspapers reported Monday.

Mr. Hrawi, after meeting the pontiff in the Vatican, said the pope had "agreed 75 per cent" with the request to boycott the celebration in Bethlehem, the French-language L'Orient le Jour said.

During the meeting, Mr. Hrawi told the pope that his request was important for Muslims and Christians of the region, particularly in Lebanon where Israel occupies a "buffer zone" along their border.

The English-language Daily Star said Mr. Hrawi believed that the pope might "avoid celebrating the... millennium jubilee in Bethlehem if peace has not yet been achieved" in the Middle East.

Most of Bethlehem is under the control of the Palestinian National Authority.

Mr. Hrawi led a large Lebanese delegation to the Vatican for Sunday's ceremony to beatify Nirmallah Hardini, a 19th-century Lebanese Christian Maronite monk.

The Lebanese president also met his Italian counterpart, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, Friday in Rome.

Turkish activists blast human rights body over headscarves ban

ANKARA (AP) — Activists and Islamist writers Monday criticised a government-run human rights board for supporting a ban on Islamic attire at schools and public offices.

"An organisation that is supposed to be the guarantee of human rights [has] issued a decision that says we can encroach the most basic of those rights," commented Fehmi Koru, a columnist for the Islamist daily Zaman.

The Rights Coordinating Board ruled last week that the Islamic-style headscarves, turbans or cloaks were a political symbol and therefore violated Turkey's secular laws and public order.

On Monday, two students and a police officer were slightly injured in scuffles which erupted after a group of students protested an

Netanyahu faces another political storm over bid to conscript rabbinical students

TEL AVIV (AP) — Religious politicians on Monday threatened to bring down Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu if he even considers an opposition bill to conscript Jewish seminary students into the armed forces.

The bill, introduced Monday by Labour Party leader Ehud Barak, reflects secular Israelis' growing resentment of ultra-Orthodox Jews, most of whom don't serve in the army.

Most ultra-Orthodox receive deferment, and are even given a government stipend, provided they are studying full-time at a religious seminary and don't have a job. In recent years, the number of Yeshiva students with deferments has swollen to over 29,000. In the past year, 3,500 new deferments were granted.

Mr. Barak's bill proposes to reduce the number of new deferments to 700 of the most outstanding Torah students each year.

"The aim is equal sharing of the burden," said Mr. Barak, a former armed forces chief of staff and Israel's most highly decorated soldier.

Mr. Barak is the opposition's candidate for prime minister, and apparently has given up any hope of winning the support of ultra-Orthodox

parties. In the May 1996 election, a vast majority of ultra-Orthodox voters backed Mr. Netanyahu.

Mr. Barak's bill is a watershed for the Labour Party which in the past always tried not to alienate the religious parties because it needed them as coalition partners. Mr. Barak apparently hopes to lure some secular voters away from Mr. Netanyahu's Likud Party.

Secular resentment of the ultra-Orthodox cuts across party lines, and Mr. Netanyahu announced that he would appoint a public committee, headed by a retired judge, to examine the issue.

Ultra-Orthodox members in Mr. Netanyahu's coalition said if such a panel is formed, they will bring down the government.

Israeli Deputy Housing Minister Meir Porush warned Mr. Netanyahu that if the issue is raised his United Torah Judaism Party will leave the coalition. "He said the issue is absolutely non-negotiable," Mr. Porush's spokesman, Moshe Friedman, told the Associated Press.

Mr. Porush's party colleague Avraham Ravitz said the right to study Torah full-time is a matter of principle for his constituents.

Israeli prime minister seeks to woo his former finance minister back into fold

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Former Israeli Finance Minister Dan Meridor, an influential moderate in Israel's ruling Likud Party, said Monday that he had refused an invitation from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to return to government.

Mr. Netanyahu met with Mr. Meridor for 90 minutes late Sunday as part of an apparent effort to hold off threats to his fragile coalition government from both the left and the far-right.

"He asked me to return to the government, but I refused as I already rejected a similar offer a month ago because Netanyahu is not worthy to be prime minister and must be replaced," Mr. Meridor told Israeli Radio Monday.

"The peace process is slipping away, we are headed into a crisis with the United States and economic and social problems are worsening," Mr. Meridor said.

The Haaretz newspaper said Mr. Netanyahu offered Mr. Meridor the post of foreign minister, which was vacated when another moderate, David Levy, resigned in January in a policy dispute with Mr. Netanyahu.

Mr. Meridor resigned as finance minister last year, ostensibly due to a dispute with Mr. Netanyahu over monetary policy, but he remained in the Likud Party.

But Mr. Meridor was also highly critical of the prime minister's headline stance in negotiations with the Palestinians and his autocratic method of governing.

Mr. Netanyahu's new overture came after

Mr. Meridor was approached by another Likud dissident, Tel Aviv Mayor Roni Milo, who announced last week that he was creating a new centrist party to challenge Mr. Netanyahu in the next national elections.

Mr. Milo met with Mr. Meridor late last week but failed to convince him to team up now against Mr. Netanyahu.

Mr. Meridor, considered one of the most popular Likud figures, did not rule out joining Mr. Milo but said it was too early to make a decision.

Israeli press reports said Mr. Netanyahu was anxious both to undermine Mr. Milo's attempted revolt and enlist Mr. Meridor's support in the event the far-right lodges a motion of no confidence against the government over the Palestinian peace process.

More than a dozen ultra-nationalist deputies in Mr. Netanyahu's coalition have vowed to topple the government if it agrees to U.S. proposals for new withdrawals from the West Bank as part of a deal to revive peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

The issue came to a head this weekend when Mr. Netanyahu rejected the U.S. proposal, forcing the cancellation of a planned summit meeting in Washington Monday with U.S. President Bill Clinton and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

But U.S. mediator Dennis Ross returned to Washington Monday reportedly carrying a new compromise formula which could lead to deal and a summit later this month.

Mr. Netanyahu has only a 61-seat majority in the 120-member parliament.

Vocal Iraqi minister dismissed from office

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein dismissed his minister for labour and social affairs, Abdel-Aziz Mohammad Saleh Al Sayegh, the official Iraqi News Agency reported Monday.

It said the action was taken by a republican decree. The agency gave no further details or say who would fill his portfolio.

In an interview with a Baghdad weekly last month, Mr. Al Sayegh was reported to have said that Iraqi prisons suffered from overcrowding and that the number of prisoners in Iraq was five times the capacity of its prisons.

He was harshly attacked by the press for the state of Iraqi jails. It is not known whether criticism by the media had any bearing on his dismissal.

Mr. Al Sayegh assumed his post in December 1996.

Press: Kuwaiti collaborator with Iraq escapes to Turkey

KUWAIT (AP) — A Kuwaiti who was appointed by Baghdad as the head of an interim government in Kuwait shortly after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of this small state has fled to Turkey, Al Rai Al Am daily reported Monday.

The man, Ala Hussein Ali, did not return to Kuwait after the February 1991 liberation, reportedly opting to live in the Iraqi capital.

The newspaper quoted "reliable sources" it did not name as saying Mr. Ali fled Baghdad to Turkey with the help of Kurds to escape financial and personal problems. Mr. Ali had reportedly lost his good relations with the Iraqi leadership.

The daily said Mr. Ali contacted a Gulf merchant from Ankara asking for \$50,000 he needed to leave Turkey to a neighbouring country, but the merchant declined.

Greenpeace: Turkish nuclear reactor poses threat to Middle East region

BEIRUT (AP) — A planned Turkish nuclear reactor poses a threat to countries from North Africa to Central Asia, the environmental group Greenpeace said in a study released Monday.

The report predicts how contamination would spread if there were an accident at the proposed nuclear power plant at Akkuyu Bay on Turkey's southeastern Mediterranean coast.

"The siting of nuclear power reactors [in Turkey] is a potential hazard for the entire region, not just Turkey," the report warns.

The report noted that because of air masses and wind patterns over southern Turkey, countries from North Africa to the Gulf region as well as Uzbekistan and

Kazakhstan in Central Asia would be at "substantial risk" should an accident occur at the plant.

Greenpeace, which said Turkey plans to build 10 nuclear plants by 2020, urged Ankara to instead "invest in cleaner, safer and cheaper alternatives, such as energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies." The study was commissioned by Greenpeace and conducted by the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at Australian National University in Canberra.

Turkey is to decide later this year on who will build the Akkuyu plant. Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. and Germany's Siemens are the two leading bidders, Greenpeace said.

Hamas founder meets Kuwaiti crown prince Sheikh Yassin says he declined Iraqi invitation until missing Kuwaitis controversy is resolved

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, founder of the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas, met Kuwait's crown prince here Monday amid rumblings of discontent from MPs who accuse Hamas of maintaining links with Iraq.

The official Kuwaiti news agency KUNA said several ministers also attended the talks between Kuwaiti Crown Prince Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah and Sheikh Yassin, the first Palestinian leader to visit the emirate since the 1991 Gulf war.

The Hamas founder and spiritual guide flew in Saturday to a warm reception at the airport from Islamist MPs, but was snubbed by liberal MPs although they avoided criticism of Sheikh Yassin himself.

"The Hamas movement does not always take into account the dangers which the Baghdad regime poses for the region," said Samir Manis, an MP of the liberal Democratic Forum grouping.

Earlier this year, the Palestinian group threatened to launch new anti-Israeli attacks if the United States undertook military action against Iraq during a

crisis over U.N. arms inspections.

Sheikh Yassin, who was freed in October after eight years in Israeli jail, has called for Kuwait "to turn a new page" in relations with the Palestinians and said he was seeking its "moral, material and political support."

Kuwait, the fifth leg of a Gulf tour by Sheikh Yassin, suspended ties with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) because of its support for Baghdad during the crisis which followed Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait and led to the Gulf war.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were expelled from Kuwait after the war which evicted Iraqi troops.

Sheikh Yassin told KUNA that he has also received an invitation from Iraq but that he declined to visit Baghdad until it settled the issue of Kuwaitis missing from the occupation.

The spiritual guide of Hamas was invited to Kuwait by Sheikh Saad. Since April, he has already been to Iran, Qatar and Saudi Arabia on a regional tour and is also expected to visit Sudan.

Palestinian journalist tortured by Palestinian police — rights group

Two Palestinians killed in Lebanon

RAMALLAH (AFP) — A Palestinian television cameraman under detention by Palestinian security forces has undergone "severe torture," a human rights group said on Monday.

Abbas Momeni, 25, a cameraman for Reuters television, has "undergone torture by various means," including beating with electric wires, being hung from his hands and deprivation of food and sleep, said Al Damir, a Palestinian group upholding prisoners' rights.

On Sunday, Mr. Momeni "tried to escape by jumping from the third floor of the general intelligence building, where he was being held, and suffered a broken leg," Al Damir said in a statement received by Agence France Presse.

He made it to Ramallah hospital, where he was again detained by Palestinian security

forces, the group said.

Mr. Momeni has been held for questioning for the past six days, apparently for his role in receiving a videotape from the Hamas in April.

Reuters broadcast the videotape, in which a masked man claimed to be Adel Awadallah, a Hamas military leader, and accused Palestinian security officials of the Mar. 29 slaying of Hamas bombmaker Mohieddin Sharif.

Mr. Momeni was first called in for questioning by police over the tape several weeks ago, but he was released after a few hours, sources close to him said.

Mr. Momeni received the tape after an anonymous phone call told him where to find the cassette, the sources said.

Palestinian general intelligence said in a statement on Sunday that Mr. Momeni was being held for questioning

the movement over leadership, money, and strategy. Hamas denies the claims, accusing Israel of killing Sharif, possibly with Palestinian help.

Human rights groups have accused the Palestinian National Authority of harassing journalists to suppress versions of Sharif's death which contradict the police claims.

"over security issues in which he is suspected of involvement."

After Reuters broadcast the video, its Gaza City office was closed down for several days by police, who accused the office of "spreading stories damaging to Palestinian society."

Palestinian police say Sharif was killed by Mr. Awadallah's followers in a dispute within



Amman to attend Cannes festival opening

PARIS (AP) — Mixing politics with show biz, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan will join the glitterati at this week's opening of the 51st Cannes Film Festival, organisers said.

Annan will walk up the red-carpeted steps of the festival palace with French Culture Minister Catherine Trautmann on opening night Wednesday, said a festival statement.

The U.N. office in Paris confirmed Mr. Annan will attend. This year, Cannes "is associating itself with the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," said the festival statement.

Cher and Bono still close through medium

NEW YORK (AP) — Sonny Bono is gone, but he and long-time partner Cher are still close. The singer-actress, who gave a moving eulogy for the U.S. congressman who died last winter in a skiing accident, says that she communicates with the entertainer-turned-politician through spiritual medium James Van Praagh.

"He told me things only Sonny could have known," Cher said in the May 16-22 issue of TV Guide. "I thought this would be a really great story to tell because without him I wouldn't be where I am, wherever that is," she said of her singing partner.

'Godzilla' director only wanted to talk to actor about fiancée

NEW YORK (AP) — When "Godzilla" co-star Hank Azaria first met the film's director, all he wanted to talk about was Azaria's fiancée, Academy Award winner Helen Hunt. Told that Roland Emmerich loved Hunt, Azaria deadpanned: "Me too." Asked how they got together, Azaria quipped: "What can I tell you? I auditioned, like everybody else."

Success has brought a hectic pace the usually easygoing actor admits has made him "irritable at times," a mindset that gave him insight into Godzilla's destructive nature.

"That's how monsters feel inside, I think," he said in the June U.S. magazine. "They just can't handle all the details."

Linda McCartney awarded posthumous award

NEW YORK (AP) — Linda McCartney has been posthumously awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honour, McCartney, the wife of Paul McCartney and a long-time crusader for vegetarianism, died of cancer last month at age 56. She was one of 120 people honoured at a ceremony on Ellis Island, where immigrants to the U.S. used to be processed before entering New York City. No one from the family was at the ceremony, so the medal will be delivered to McCartney in England. The awards from the U.S. National Ethnic Coalition of Organisations honour a "wide variety of efforts to 'enrich or invigorate society,'" said chairman William Dennis Fugazy.

Potter's expensive letter

LONDON (AP) — A New York City book dealer paid nearly \$240,000 at auction for a letter by the writer Beatrix Potter which included her first drawing of the frog character Jeremy Fisher. The letter was rescued in 1978 by a little girl in Connecticut, who spotted it in a box of junk her parents intended to throw away.

Catherine Potter, a book specialist at Sotheby's, said the price of \$239,670 was an auction record for any book, letter, drawing or manuscript by the famous writer.

with us last week that they are their proposed not make a Mr. Erekat to stated Press.

"I don't think Americans have any changes, better than added.

In a U.S. agreement in 1997, Mr. Netanyahu pledged to call separate the separate the drawings by the through the the pullbacks was mined.

The Palestinians expected to be of most of the by the end of a drawal process none of the have been c with Mr. Netanyahu he could over land as 1 Palestinians he up to their p fight to Islam it.

Mr. Erekat said that the Palest to "bitterly the American ce and would not more change.

Netanyahu was about 13 minutes the package. it right to say 13 Erekat said.

In Brussels on Palestinian leader Arafat also said not accept any the U.S. plan.

However, the some signs a Netanyahu might end agree to be more than 9 pe the land. The

proposal was the

the

the

G-8 summit to discuss
Middle East peace process

The Middle East peace process will be discussed at this weekend's summit of the eight major industrial nations in Birmingham, England.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will also attend the summit, which is being held at the invitation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair.